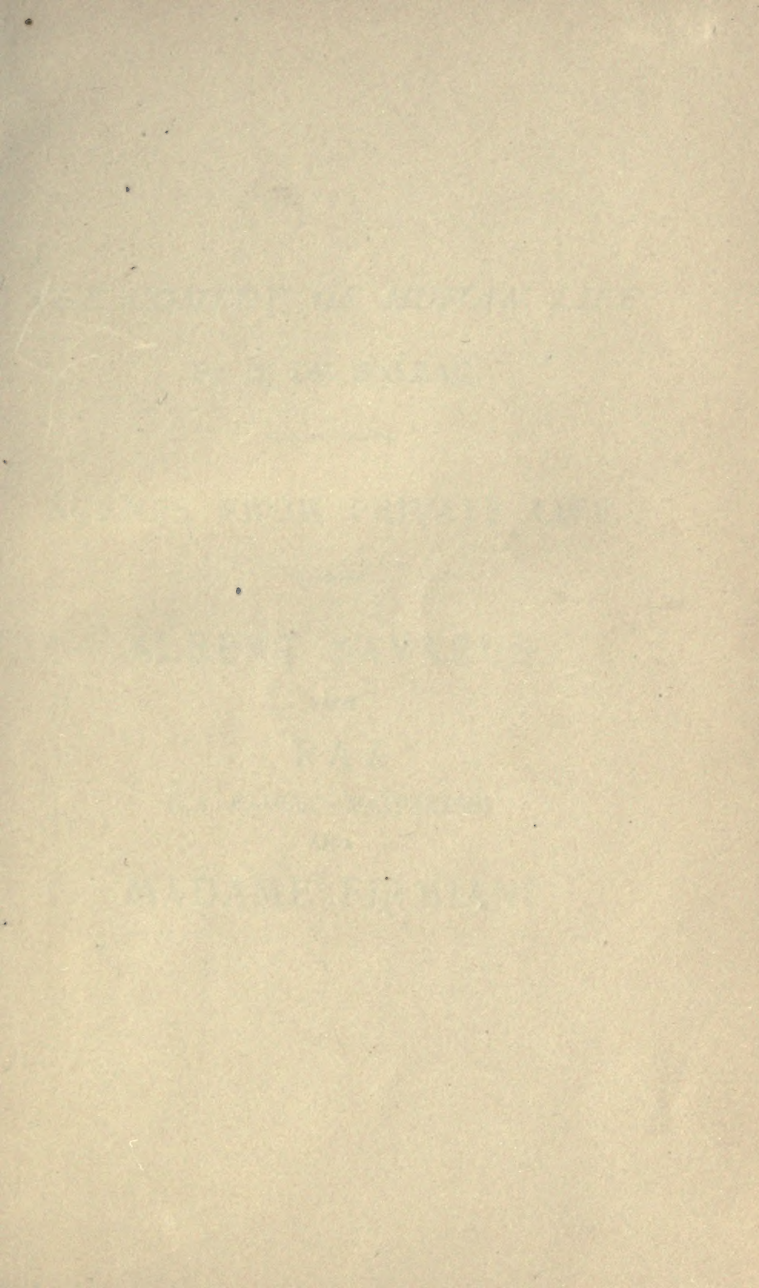




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THE COMEDY OF HUMAN LIFE

By H. DE BALZAC

SCENES FROM PRIVATE LIFE

ALBERT SAVARUS

WITH

PAZ

(LA FAUSSE MAÎTRESSE)

AND

MADAME FIRMIANI

BALZAC'S NOVELS.

Translated by Miss K. P. WORMELEY.

Already Published:

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AN HISTORICAL MYSTERY.
ALBERT SAVARUS.

ROBERTS BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
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HONORÉ DE BALZAC

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

ALBERT SAVARUS



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ALBERT SAVARUS.

TO

MADAME ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN.

ONE of the few salons in which the archbishop of Besançon presented himself during the Restoration was that of Madame la Baronne de Watteville, whom he particularly liked on account of her religious sentiments.

One word about this lady, — the most important female personage in Besançon.

Monsieur de Watteville, a descendant of the famous Watteville, the luckiest and the most illustrious of murderers and renegades (his extraordinary adventures are too well known historically to need relating here), — Monsieur de Watteville of the nineteenth century was just as gentle, as tranquil, as his ancestor of the great epoch was fiery and turbulent. After living all his life in La Comté, like a woodlouse in the crack of a panel, he married the heiress of the celebrated family de Rupt. Mademoiselle de Rupt added an income of twenty thousand francs from landed property to the ten thou-

sand francs a year, also from landed property, of the Baron de Watteville. The arms of the Swiss nobleman (the Watteviles are Swiss) were quartered on those of the de Rupts. This marriage, arranged in 1802, took place in 1815, during the second Restoration. Three years after the birth of a daughter all Madame de Watteville's grandparents had died, and their property was divided. Monsieur de Watteville's house was then sold, and the family took possession of the fine mansion of the de Rupts in the rue de la Préfecture, the vast garden of which extended as far as the rue du Perron. Madame de Watteville, who was pious as a young girl, became devout after her marriage. She is one of the queens of that saintly fraternity which gives to the highest society of Besançon the gloomy tone and the prudish manners which harmonize so well with the character of the town.

Monsieur le Baron de Watteville, a spare little man, thin, and dull in mind, seemed to be used up without apparent reason why he should be, for he was gifted with a crass ignorance. But as his wife was a warm blonde, with a nature so repellent that it became proverbial (they still say in Besançon "sharp as Madame Watteville"), certain wits in his own social sphere were wont to declare that he had worn himself out against that rock, — "Rupt" being evidently derived from *rupes*. Scientific observers will

not fail to note that Rosalie was the sole offspring of the marriage.

Monsieur de Watteville passed his life in a luxurious workshop, engaged in turning. As an offset to this vocation he had taken up a fancy for collecting. To those medical philosophers who make a special study of madness, the disposition to collect is the first stage of mental alienation, showing itself in little things. The Baron de Watteville collected the shells and geological fragments of the vicinity of Besançon. A few critics, women especially, said of M. de Watteville, "He knows what he is about; he saw from the time of his marriage that he could never get the better of his wife, so he flung himself into a mechanical occupation and the pleasures of good eating."

The Rupt mansion was not without a certain splendor, worthy of the times of Louis XIV., and it bore signs of the nobility of the two families united in 1815. An old-fashioned luxury pervaded it, which was not like that of the present day. Crystal chandeliers designed in the form of leaves, brocaded hangings, carpets everywhere, gilded furniture, were all in harmony with the old liveries of the elderly servants. Though served on dingy family silver, round a centre-piece of glass bearing Dresden china, the food was exquisite. The wines, chosen by Monsieur de Watteville (who, to vary the monotony of existence, was his own butler), had

what might be called a departmental celebrity. Madame de Watteville's fortune was now considerably augmented; while that of her husband, consisting of the estate of Rouxey, bringing in, as we have said, ten thousand francs a year, had not been increased, like hers, by inheritance. It is unnecessary to call attention to the fact that Madame de Watteville's intimacy with the archbishop drew to her house the three or four distinguished or clever abbés who were attached to the archbishopric and were not averse to a good table.

At the assembling of a dinner-party, given on the occasion of some wedding early in September, 1834, and just as the women had gathered in a circle round the fireplace and the men were standing in groups near the windows, a general acclamation broke forth as Monsieur l'Abbé de Grancey was announced.

“ Well, how about the suit? ” they cried.

“ Won ! ” replied the vicar-general. “ The judgment of the court, of which we despaired, you all know why — ”

This was an allusion to the composition of the Royal court in 1830 ; nearly all the legitimists having resigned their places in it.

“ — has been given in our favor on all points, and reverses the judgment of the lower court.”

“ Every one thought you would lose your case.”

“ And so we should if it had not been for me. I

sent our lawyer to Paris, which enabled me to engage at the last moment the services of another man, to whom we owe our success, — an extraordinary man.”

“In Besançon?” asked Monsieur de Watteville, innocently.

“In Besançon,” replied the Abbé de Grancey.

“Yes, Savaron,” remarked a handsome young man named de Soulas who was sitting by Madame de Watteville.

“He sat up five or six nights, studied the briefs and documents, had half a dozen interviews with me, each lasting several hours,” resumed Monsieur de Grancey, who now made his appearance at the hôtel de Rupt for the first time in twenty days, “and it has ended by Monsieur Savaron completely beating the distinguished lawyer our opponents brought from Paris. The young man was really marvellous, so the council tell me. Our Chapter is doubly victorious, — victorious legally and politically too, because we have beaten liberalism in the person of the chosen advocate of the municipality. ‘Our adversaries,’ said Monsieur Savaron, ‘cannot expect to obtain connivance everywhere for the ruin of archbishoprics.’ The judge was forced to demand silence, for the audience applauded. So, the ownership of the old convent remains with the Chapter of the cathedral of Besançon. Monsieur Savaron invited the Paris lawyer to dinner as we left the courtroom; the

latter said, in accepting, 'All honor to the victor!' and congratulated him without the least resentment."

"Pray where did you unearth that lawyer?" said Madame de Watteville. "I never heard his name mentioned."

"You can see his windows from here," replied the vicar-general. "Monsieur Savaron lives in the rue du Perron; the garden of his house adjoins yours."

"He does not belong in La Comté," said Monsieur de Watteville.

"He seems to belong nowhere," said Madame de Chavoncourt; "no one knows where he comes from."

"But who is he?" persisted Madame de Watteville, taking the arm of Monsieur de Soulas to lead the way into the dining-room. "If he is a stranger, what brought him to Besançon? It seems a strange thing for a lawyer to do."

"Very strange!" repeated young Amédée de Soulas, whose biography here becomes necessary for the full understanding of this history.

From time immemorial France and England have exchanged airy nothings, all the more persistently because the tyranny of the custom house cannot reach them. The fashions which we call English in Paris are called French in London, and *vice versa*. The enmity of the two nations ceases at two points, — on the question of words, and on that of clothes. "God save the king"

— the national air of England — was composed by Lulli for the chorus of either “Athalie” or “Esther.” The pannier petticoats, brought by an Englishwoman to Paris, were invented in London (all the world knows why) by a Frenchwoman, — the famous Duchess of Portsmouth. Paris began by laughing at them; so that the first Englishwoman who appeared in the Tuileries thus encased came near being crushed by the mob. But the fashion was adopted for all that, and it tyrannized over European womankind for half a century. After the peace of 1815 Paris laughed for a year at the long waists of the Britannic ladies, and went to see Pothier and Brunet in “The Funny Englishwomen;” but in 1816 and 1817 the belts of the Parisians, which cut their bosoms in 1814, had come down by degrees till they defined their hips. For the last ten years England has been making us little gifts of language. In place of the former *incroyable, merveilleux, élégant*, — three heirs of the *petit-mâîtres*, the etymology of which is more or less indecent, — we now say “dandy” and “lion.” The “lion” did not produce “la lionne.” That term came from the famous song of Alfred de Musset: —

“Avez-vous vu dans Barcelone

C’est ma maîtresse et ma lionne.”

There has been a fusion, or, if you like, confusion between the two terms and their dominant ideas.

When some nonsense amuses Paris — which is eager after nonsense as it is after masterpieces — it cannot be supposed that the provinces should refrain from getting hold of it. Therefore, as soon as the “lion” appeared in Paris, with his mane, his beard, his moustache, his waistcoats, above all, his eyeglass held to his eye without the aid of hands by a contraction of cheek and eyebrow, the chief towns of several departments beheld the glory of sub-lions, who protested, by the elegance of their apparel and the straps to their trousers, against the slipshod habits of their fellow-citizens. Thus it happened that Besançon enjoyed, in 1834, the presence of a lion in the person of Monsieur Amédée-Sylvain-Jacques de Soulas, spelled “Souleyas” at the time of the Spanish occupation. Amédée de Soulas is perhaps the only descendant of a Spanish family in Besançon. Spain sent her sons to do business in La Comté, but few Spaniards settled there. The Soulas remained because of their connection with Cardinal Grandvelle. Young de Soulas was constantly talking of leaving Besançon, — a melancholy, devout, unliterary town, a garrison town, the manners and morals of which may be worth depicting. This avowed intention on his part enabled him to live, like a man uncertain of his future, in three rooms, very slightly furnished, at the end of the rue Neuve where it joins the rue de la Préfecture.

Young Monsieur de Soulas could not get along with-

out a tiger. This tiger was the son of one of his farmers, — a squat little fellow of fourteen, named Babylas. The lion dressed his tiger very well, in a short iron-gray coat buckled in with a polished leather belt, blue plush breeches, a red waistcoat, varnished boots with tops, a high hat with broad hat-band, and gilt buttons bearing the crest of the Soulas family. Amédée gave the lad white cotton gloves, his washing, and thirty-six francs a month, for which the tiger fed himself, — a sum which seemed enormous to the grisettes of Besançon. Four hundred and twenty francs to a boy of fourteen, not counting presents! The presents consisted in the sale of his old and mended clothes, a *pour-boire* when Soulas exchanged a horse, and the stable manure. The two horses, managed with the strictest economy, cost, one with another, eight hundred francs a year. The sum total for the lion's supplies from Paris, consisting of perfumery, cravats, jewelry, boot-polish and clothes, came to twelve hundred francs. If to this you add groom, that is, tiger, horses, immaculate linen, and a rent of six hundred francs, you will find a total outlay of three thousand francs a year. Now the father of young Monsieur de Soulas had left him an income of only four thousand, the product of a few rather poor farms, all requiring outlays, which outlays caused the lion painful uncertainties in the matter of revenue; so that he could scarcely count on more than three francs



a day for his maintenance, his pocket-money, and for cards. In consequence of this he dined out frequently, and breakfasted with remarkable frugality. When he was absolutely forced to dine at his own expense, he sent his tiger to a restaurant for a couple of dishes of food — not to cost more than twenty-five sous for the two. Young Monsieur de Soulas had the reputation of extravagance, — he was thought capable of committing “follies ;” whereas the poor fellow could only make both ends meet at the end of the year by an astuteness, a genius for management, which would have made the fame of a good housekeeper. People were ignorant in those days, especially at Besançon, how much six francs’ worth of boot-polish, yellow gloves at fifty sous a pair, cleaned (in profoundest secrecy) to make them serve three times, cravats at ten francs which lasted three months, four waistcoats at twenty-five francs, and trousers strapped below the boot, cut into a capital. How should it be otherwise, inasmuch as we see women in Paris paying particular attention to empty-headed fellows who visit them and get the better of really remarkable men by reason of those frivolous advantages which may be bought for fifteen louis — including hair-frizzing and fine linen shirts.

If this unfortunate young man seems to have become a lion on rather cheap terms, you must know that Amédée de Soulas had been three times to Switzerland,

twice to Paris, once from Paris to London. He was regarded as an intelligent traveller who could say : " In England, when I was there," etc. Dowagers would remark to him : " You who have been in England," etc. He had even gone as far as Lombardy, and skirted the Italian lakes. He read the new books ; and while cleaning his gloves his tiger Babylas was told to reply to visitors : " Monsieur is studying." This led some conservative Besancians to endeavor to depreciate him with the remark : " He is a man of *advanced ideas*." But Amédée possessed the faculty of enunciating with true Besancian gravity the commonplace remarks of the day, and this gave him the reputation of being one of the most enlightened members of the aristocracy. He wore fashionable jewelry, and in his head he carried such thoughts as were put into it by the newspapers.

In 1834 Amédée was twenty-five years old, of medium height, dark complexion, broad chest, strong shoulders, thighs somewhat too round, feet already fat, hands white and dimpled, with a chin beard, moustachios that rivalled those of the garrison, a good-natured fat face, rather ruddy, a flattened nose, brown eyes without expression, and nothing Spanish about him. He was advancing with great strides towards an obesity which would certainly prove fatal to his ambitions. His finger-nails were well cared-for, his beard carefully trimmed, and every article of his clothing was kept

with a nicety that was truly English. Thus it came to pass that Amédée de Soulas was considered the handsomest man in Besançon. The hair-dresser, who came to him daily at a regular hour (another luxury, costing sixty francs a year), held him up as the sovereign arbiter of elegance and fashion. Amédée slept late, made his toilet, mounted his horse at twelve o'clock, and rode out to one of his farms to practise with a pistol. He laid as much stress on this occupation as Lord Byron in his later years. Then he returned to Besançon about three o'clock, admired as he rode along by all the grisettes and such persons as happened to be at their windows. After his pretended studies, which lasted till four o'clock, he dressed to dine out, spent the evening playing whist in various salons of the Besancian aristocracy, and went home to bed at eleven o'clock. No existence was ever more undisguised, more virtuous, more irreproachable in every way, for he punctually attended the church services on Sundays and feast-days.

To make the reader understand how this mode of life could have wounded the proprieties, it is necessary to give a brief explanation of Besançon. No town offers a more stolid, dumb resistance to progress. At Besançon the administration, the public employés, the military, in fact all who belong to the government and who are sent from Paris to occupy any post whatever,

are designated in a lump by the expressive term "colony." The colony is neutral ground, — the only ground where, as at church, the aristocratic society and the bourgeois society ever meet. Here begin, apropos of a word, a look, a gesture, hatreds of family to family, feuds between bourgeois women and aristocratic women, which last till death, and widen the already impassable ditch by which the two societies are separated. Excepting the families of the Clermont-Mont-Saint-Jean, de Beauffremont, de Scey, de Gramont, and a few others who live exclusively on their estates in La Comté, the Besancian nobility dates back only two centuries, to the period of the conquest of Louis XIV. This society is essentially parliamentary, with a pride, stiffness, gravity, assumption, haughtiness, which can be compared with no others, not even those of the court of Austria; for in these qualities the Besancians could abash every salon in Vienna. As for Victor Hugo, Nodier, or Fourier, the true glories of the town, no one ever thinks of them; they are never mentioned. The marriages of the nobility are arranged while the children are still in their cradles, — so carefully are all things planned, the least as well as the greatest. Never has a foreigner, an outsider, contrived to slip into any of these houses; and it requires efforts of diplomacy such as Prince Talleyrand might be glad to know and profit by in a congress, before the colonels and titled

officers in garrison, many of them belonging to the noblest families in France, can be admitted. In 1834 Amédée was the sole individual in Besançon who wore straps to his trousers. This will explain why young Monsieur de Soulas was a "lion." But perhaps a little anecdote will make you thoroughly understand Besançon.

Not long before the time at which this history begins, the Préfecture had occasion to send to Paris for an editor for its journal, — it being necessary to protect that paper against the "little Gazette" which the "great Gazette" had lately hatched in Besançon, and also against the "Patriot" in which republicanism was rampant. Paris sent down a young man, quite ignorant of La Comté, who led off in a column of local items in the style of the "Charivari;" whereupon the head of the administration sent for the journalist and said to him: "You must understand, monsieur, that we are grave, — more than grave, dull; we do not wish to be amused; we are furious when made to laugh. Let your writings be as hard to digest as the heaviest lucubrations of the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes;' and even then you will hardly attain to the tone of the Besancians." The editor took the hint and wrote thenceforth a philosophical patois, most difficult to understand. He met with complete success.

If young Monsieur de Soulas did not fall in the esti-

mation of the salons of Besançon it was out of pure vanity on their part; the aristocracy was not unwilling to appear to modernize itself in the person of one of its own members, and so present to Parisian nobles who might visit La Comté a young man who was in some degree like themselves. But as for Amédée, all his hidden labor, the powder he flung in the eyes of society, his apparent follies, his latent wisdom, had an aim; otherwise the Besancian lion would not have been born in Besançon. Amédée wished to make an advantageous marriage by proving at the right time that his farms were not mortgaged, and that he had laid by some money; but he also wanted to make himself a figure in society; he wished to be thought the handsomest as well as the most elegant of men in order to win the notice and eventually the hand of Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville.

In 1830, when young Monsieur de Soulas began his career of dandyism, Rosalie was fourteen. In 1834 Mademoiselle de Watteville was reaching the age when young girls are easily struck by just those peculiarities which called the attention of society to Amédée. Many lions make themselves lions for the sake of their schemes and speculations. The Wattevilles, who for twelve years past had had an income of fifty thousand francs, did not spend more than twenty-four thousand francs a year, although they received the upper society of

Besançon on Mondays and Fridays. On Mondays they gave a dinner, on Fridays an evening party. Consequently, it was easy to calculate the amount of twenty-six thousand francs laid by annually for the last twelve years, and invested with the sagacity which distinguished the old nobility. It was generally believed that Madame de Watteville, thinking herself rich enough in lands, had invested her savings in the three-per-cents in 1830. For the last five years, therefore, the lion had worked like a mole to reach the upper regions of that stern woman's good-will, all the while behaving in a manner calculated to flatter the vanity of Mademoiselle de Watteville. The baroness was in the secret of the many devices by which Amédée was able to keep up an appearance in Besançon, and she esteemed him the more for them. Soulas had put himself under her wing when she was thirty years old, and at that time he had the courage to admire her and make an idol of her; he even reached the point of relating to her (but to no one else) the broad stories which some canting women are fond of hearing, enabled as they are by their own high virtue to look into the pit without falling, or to finger the meshes of the devil without entanglement. Do you now see why this lion did not allow himself the slightest intrigue? He made his life as plain as day; he lived, as it were, in the streets, so as to play the part towards the baroness of sacrificing such things,

all the while regaling her mind with sins she denied to her flesh. A man who has the privilege of slipping questionable tales into the ear of a *dévoté* is always charming in her eyes. If this exemplary lion had known human nature a little better he might, without danger, have allowed himself a few love-affairs among the grisettes of Besançon who regarded him as a king; his intimacy with the stern and prudish baroness might even have been promoted thereby. To Rosalie this Cato seemed extravagant; he professed elegance; showed her in perspective the brilliant rôle of a fashionable woman in Paris, where he proposed to be sent as deputy. These sagacious manœuvres were crowned with success. In 1834 the mothers of the forty noble families which composed the upper Besancian society cited young Monsieur Amédée de Soulas as the most charming young man in Besançon. No one ventured to dispute his position in the hôtel de Rupt, and all Besançon regarded him as the future husband of Rosalie de Watteville. In fact, a few words had already been exchanged on that subject between the baroness and Amédée, — the utter insignificance of the baron giving certainty to their plans.

Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville, to whom her fortune (which would some day be enormous) gave much importance, brought up within the circle of the hôtel de Rupt, — which her mother rarely quitted, so

attached was she to the dear archbishop, — had been from her earliest childhood sternly repressed by an exclusively religious education, and by the despotism of a mother who controlled her rigidly by principles. Rosalie knew absolutely nothing. Is it knowing anything to have studied geography in Guthrie, sacred history, ancient history, French history, and the four rules, — all passed through the sieve of an old Jesuit teacher? Drawing, music, and dancing were forbidden, as more likely to corrupt than to embellish life. The baroness taught her daughter every possible stitch in needlework and embroidery, — plain-sewing, satin-stitch, drawn-work. At seventeen years of age Rosalie had read nothing but “*Les Lettres édifiantes*” and works on the science of heraldry. Her eyes had never been contaminated by a newspaper. She heard mass every morning in the cathedral, to which her mother took her, returned to breakfast, made a little turn in the garden, and then took her work and sat beside the baroness, who received visits till dinner time. After dinner, unless it were Monday or Friday, she accompanied Madame de Watteville to the houses of their friends, — not, however, saying anything but what the maternal orders sanctioned.

At eighteen, Mademoiselle de Watteville was a delicate, thin girl, — flat, blond, white, and insignificant to the last degree. Her eyes (of a pale blue) were

improved by the play of the eyelids, which, when lowered, threw shadows on the cheeks. A few reddish spots injured the whiteness of her forehead, which was well modelled. Her face was exactly like those saints of Albert Dürer and the painters who preceded Perugino, — the same plump shape, though slender, same delicacy saddened by ecstasy, same stiff naïveté. Everything about her, even her attitude, resembled those virgins whose beauty is not perceived in all its mystic lustre except by the eyes of a thoughtful observer. She had handsome hands (though they were somewhat red), the prettiest of feet, — the feet of a lady of the manor. As a usual thing, she wore gowns of a simple cotton material; but on Sundays and fête days her mother allowed her to put on silk. The fashion of her clothes, which were made in Besançon, made her almost ugly; whereas her mother endeavored to borrow grace, beauty, and elegance from Paris, whence she obtained every article of her own dress and toilet, thanks to the services of young Monsieur de Soulas. Rosalie had never worn silk stockings or boots, always cotton stockings and leather shoes. On gala days she had a muslin gown, her hair was dressed, and she wore bronze kid shoes.

This training and Rosalie's modest air and manner concealed an iron nature. Physiologists and profound observers of human nature will tell you, to your great

amazement, perhaps, that temperaments, characters, mind and genius reappear in families at long intervals, precisely like what are called hereditary diseases. Thus talent, like gout, often skips two generations. We have proof of this phenomenon in the illustrious instance of George Sand, in whom are revived the vigor, power, and congenital qualities of Maréchal Saxe, her grandfather. The determined nature, the romantic audacity of the famous Watteville had returned to earth in the soul of his great-niece, where they were strengthened still further by the tenacity and pride of the blood of the Rupts. But these virtues, or defects, if you prefer to call them so, were as deeply hidden in the soul of this young girl, apparently so soft and yielding, as the boiling lava is hidden in the breast of a mountain before it becomes a volcano. Madame de Watteville alone may have suspected this legacy of two bloods. She was so stern in her treatment of Rosalie that she replied one day to the archbishop, who blamed her harshness: "Let me manage her, monseigneur; I know her,—she has more than one Beelzebub under her skin."

The baroness watched her daughter all the more closely because she considered her credit as a mother at stake. Besides, she had nothing else to do. Clotilde de Rupt, then thirty-five years of age, and virtually the widow of a man who spent his life turning egg-cups

out of every kind of wood, intent only on making circles of six lines in iron-wood, and snuff-boxes for all his acquaintance, coquetted, in due propriety, with Amédée de Soulas. When this young man was at her house she would often send her daughter from the room and then recall her, trying to detect some impulse of jealousy in that young soul, for the purpose of subduing it. She was like the police in their treatment of Republicans; but she only wasted her efforts. Rosalie never showed the least signs of revolt. Then the cold *dévôte* would reproach her for want of feeling. Rosalie knew her mother well enough to be certain that if she did show any liking for young Monsieur de Soulas she would bring a sharp reprimand upon her head. Therefore she replied to all her mother's provocations with speeches very improperly called jesuitical; for the Jesuits were strong, and these reticences are only breastworks behind which timidity shelters itself. At such times the mother accused the daughter of dissimulation. If, unluckily, a flash of the real Watteville and de Rupt nature showed itself, the mother demanded the reverence that children owed to parents, to reduce Rosalie to passive obedience. This secret battle went on in the inmost recesses of domestic life, behind closed doors. The vicar-general, that dear Abbé de Grancey, the friend of the late archbishop, wise as he was in his capacity as grand penitentiary of the diocese, could not

discover whether this struggle had roused a hatred between mother and daughter, whether the mother was jealous in advance of the daughter, or whether the suit paid by Amédée to the daughter through the mother had gone beyond the prescribed limits. In his position as friend of the family he did not confess either the mother or the daughter. Rosalie, too often beaten, morally speaking, on account of young Monsieur de Soulas, could not, to use a familiar phrase, endure him; so that, whenever he addressed her with an attempt to capture her heart she answered him coldly. This repugnance, visible only to the eyes of her mother, was a perpetual subject of admonition.

“Rosalie, I do not see why you affect such coldness to Amédée; is it because he is the friend of the family, and is agreeable to us, your father and me?”

“Why, mamma,” said the poor girl, one day, “should not I be blamed still more if I treated him kindly?”

“What is the meaning of that?” cried Madame de Watteville. “What do you mean by those words? Your mother is unjust, is she; and in your opinion she would be in any case? Let me never hear such an answer to your mother again,” etc.

This quarrel lasted three hours and three quarters. Rosalie remarked upon it. Her mother became white with anger and ordered her to her room, where Rosalie

studied the meaning of the scene, without finding any — so innocent was she. Thus it was that young Monsieur de Soulas, whom all Besançon believed to be very near his goal, cravats displayed, boots polished, — the goal which had compelled him to use so much black wax for his moustache, so many pretty waistcoats, horse-shoes, and corsets (for he wore a leathern girth, the corset of lions), — Amédée, we say, was no further advanced in his suit than the next comer, though he had on his side the worthy and noble Abbé de Grancey. At the time when this history begins, however, Rosalie did not yet know that the young Comte Amédée de Soulas was her destined husband.

“Madame,” said Monsieur de Soulas, replying to the baroness while the very hot soup in his plate was cooling slightly, and affecting to give a quasi-romantic tone to his narrative, “one fine morning the mailcoach brought to the Hôtel National a Parisian, who, after looking about for lodgings, finally took the first floor of Mademoiselle Galard’s house in the rue du Perron. Then the stranger went straight to the mayor’s office and made his declaration of domicile ; after that he put his name down on the roll of barristers before the Court, and presented his credentials ; he also left a card on all his fellow lawyers, the members of the administration, the counsellors and the judges, on which card appeared the name of — Albert Savaron.”

“The name of Savaron is celebrated,” remarked Mademoiselle de Watteville, who was strong in heraldry; “the Savarons of Savarus are one of the oldest, noblest, and wealthiest families in Belgium.”

“He is a Frenchman without descent,” replied Amédée de Soulas. “If he takes the arms of Savaron de Savarus, he must add the bar sinister. There is no other Savarus in Brabant now than a rich heiress who is not married.”

“A bar sinister is of course the sign of illegitimacy; but the illegitimate son of a Comte de Savarus is noble,” returned Rosalie.

“That’s enough, mademoiselle,” said her mother.

“You were determined she should know heraldry,” remarked Monsieur de Watteville, “and she knows it well!”

“Pray go on, Monsieur de Soulas,” said the baroness.

“You can understand that in a town where all is classed, defined, known, settled, marked, and numbered, like Besançon, Albert Savaron has been received by his fellow-lawyers without difficulty. They contented themselves with saying: ‘Here’s a poor devil that does n’t know Besançon. Who on earth advised him to come here? What does he expect to do? And then, to send his card to the magistrates instead of calling in person! What a blunder! So, at the end

of three days not another word about Savaron ! He has taken the former valet of the late Monsieur Galard, — Jérôme, — who knows a little about cooking. Monsieur Savaron is all the more forgotten now because no one ever sees him or meets him."

"Does n't he go to mass?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"He goes on Sundays to Saint-Pierre, but always to the first mass, at eight o'clock. He rises every night between one and two and works till eight, when he breakfasts ; then he works again. He walks in the garden, and goes round it fifty or sixty times ; after which he dines and goes to bed between six and seven o'clock in the evening."

"How do you know all that?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"In the first place, madame, I live in the rue Neuve, at the corner of the rue du Perron ; I look out on the house where this mysterious personage is now residing ; then there are protocols mutually passing between my tiger and Jérôme."

"Do you converse with Babylas?"

"What else can I do during our rides?"

"How came you to choose a stranger for your lawyer?" said Madame de Watteville, addressing the vicar-general.

"The chief-justice played a trick on him," replied

Monsieur de Grancey, "and appointed him to defend before the court of assizes an almost idiotic peasant accused of forgery. Monsieur Savaron got the poor man acquitted by proving his innocence, and showing that he was merely the tool of the real criminals. Not only did his method triumph, but he obtained the arrest of two of the witnesses for the prosecution, who have since been found guilty. His speeches had a great effect on the court and jury. One of the latter — a merchant — trusted Monsieur Savaron with a delicate case the very next day, and he won it. Placed as we were, and finding it impossible for Monsieur Berryer to come to Besançon, Monsieur de Garcenault advised us to employ Monsieur Albert Savaron, and predicted our success. As soon as I saw him and listened to him I had faith in him, and I was not mistaken."

"Is there anything extraordinary about him?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Undoubtedly, madame," replied the vicar-general.

"Then do explain it to us," said Madame de Watteville.

"The first time that I saw him," said the Abbé de Grancey, "he received me in the next room to the antechamber (the former salon of old Galard), which he has had painted in old oak; the walls are entirely covered with law-books contained in book-cases also painted in old oak. This painting and the books were

the only luxuries in the room. The furniture consisted merely of a secretary in old carved wood, six old chairs covered with tapestry, brown curtains with green borders at the windows, and a green carpet on the floor. The stove in the antechamber warmed the room. While waiting I had no expectation of seeing a young man. This singular frame proved to be completely in harmony with the figure it surrounds. Monsieur Savaron entered, wearing a black merino dressing-gown, tied round the waist with a red cord, red slippers, a red flannel shirt, and a red cap —

“The devil’s livery!” cried Madame de Watteville.

“Yes,” said the abbé, “but a splendid head; black hair mingled with a few white threads, such hair as we see in Saint Peter or Saint Paul in our pictures, thick shining masses, wiry as a horse’s mane; a throat round and white as a woman’s; a magnificent forehead with one furrow down the centre of it, the furrow that grand projects, high thoughts, deep meditations imprint on the foreheads of great men; an olive complexion marbled with red; a square nose, eyes of fire, the cheeks somewhat hollow, marked with two long wrinkles — signs of suffering; a sardonic smile, a small chin rather too short, crow’s-feet about the temples, cavernous eyes rolling under the arched eyebrows like globes of fire; but with it all, in spite of these indications of violent passions, a calm air, deep resignation, a voice

of penetrating sweetness, which afterwards astonished me in the courtroom with its flexibility, — the voice of an orator, sometimes pure and candid, sometimes insinuating, but thundering when necessary, or lending itself to sarcasm — when it became incisive. The man is of middle height, neither stout nor thin. He has the hands of a prelate. The second time I called upon him he received me in his bedroom which adjoins the library. He smiled at my surprise when I saw a shabby bureau, an old carpet, a collegian's bed, and cotton curtains at the window. He came out from an inner room where no one is allowed to enter, not even Jérôme, so I hear, who merely knocks at the door. Monsieur Savaron locked that door in my presence. The third time I went there he was breakfasting in his library in the most frugal manner. This time he had sat up all night examining our documents; and as I had our lawyer with me, and poor Monsieur Girardet is very prolix, I was able to study Monsieur Savaron carefully. He is not an ordinary man, that is very certain. There is more than one secret behind that mask, which is both terrible and gentle, patient and impatient, full yet sunken. He stoops slightly, like those who carry some heavy burden."

"Why did such an eloquent man leave Paris? What is his object in coming to Besançon? Some one should have told him that strangers have no chance of success

here. People may make use of him, but the Besançons won't let him use them." Such were the comments of the company as the abbé told his tale.

"And pray why, since he did come, has he kept in such obscurity that it was only a caprice of the chief justice which brought him into notice?" asked the handsome Madame de Chavoncourt.

"After studying that fine head," continued the Abbé de Grancey, looking at his questioner with an air which seemed to say he was concealing something, "and above all, since I heard him this morning replying to one of the eagles of the Paris bar, I believe that this man, who must be about thirty-five, will some day produce a great sensation."

"Why concern ourselves with that? You have gained your suit and paid him," said Madame de Watteville, noticing that her daughter seemed to hang upon the lips of the vicar-general ever since he had begun to speak.

The conversation then took another turn and nothing more was said of Albert Savaron.

The portrait sketched by the ablest priest in the diocese had not only the attraction of a novel for Rosalie but it was in itself a romance for her. For the first time in her life she encountered the extraordinary, the marvellous, — which all youthful imaginations cherish and rush to meet with the eagerness that is very

keen at Rosalie's age. What an ideal being was Albert, gloomy, suffering, toiling, when compared in her mind with that fat and chubby Amédée, bursting with health, gallant in speech, venturing to talk of elegance in presence of the ancient grandeur of the Comtes de Rupt! Amédée was nothing to her but the cause of quarrels and reprimands, — besides, she knew him only too well; whereas this Albert Savaron offered her many an enigma to solve.

“Albert Savaron de Savarus,” she kept repeating to herself.

Could she only see him, — just perceive him! Such was the desire of the girl's soul, hitherto without desires. She went over in her heart, in her imagination, in her head, every word that the Abbé de Grancey had uttered, for each of them had struck home.

“A fine forehead!” she said to herself, looking at the foreheads of all the men around the table. “I don't see a fine one here. Monsieur de Soulas's is too prominent; Monsieur de Grancey's is handsome, but he is seventy years old and bald, and you don't know where the forehead begins —”

“What is the matter, Rosalie; why don't you eat your dinner?”

“I am not hungry, mamma,” she said. “Hands of a prelate!” she went on, to herself. “I can't remember those of the archbishop, though he confirmed me.”

At last, in the turnings and twistings of the labyrinth of her memory, she suddenly remembered that on waking one night she had seen from her bed, through the trees of the two adjoining gardens, a window brilliantly illuminated. "It must have been his light," she said to herself. "Then I can see him! I will see him!"

"Monsieur de Grancey, is the Chapter's lawsuit ended?" said Rosalie, suddenly, during a moment's silence.

Madame de Watteville exchanged a rapid glance with the vicar-general.

"What is that to you, my dear child?" she said to Rosalie, with a pretended gentleness which put her daughter on her guard for the rest of her days.

"They may appeal," replied the abbé, "but they will think twice about it."

"I could never have believed that Rosalie would think about a lawsuit during a whole dinner," remarked Madame de Watteville.

"Nor I either," said Rosalie, in a reflective way which made every one laugh, "but Monsieur de Grancey seemed so interested that I was interested too."

They rose from table, and returned to the salon. During all that evening Rosalie listened in hopes that Albert Savaron would be again spoken of. But beyond the congratulations which each new arrival offered

to the abbé on the success of the lawsuit, in which no one mentioned the lawyer, nothing further was said. Mademoiselle de Watteville waited for night with the utmost impatience. She determined to rise between two and three o'clock to look at the lighted study-windows of Albert Savaron. When the hour came she felt a sort of happiness in looking at the gleam which the lawyer's candles cast through the trees now almost shorn of their foliage. Helped by the excellent eyesight of a young girl, which was strengthened by curiosity, she saw Albert writing, and she thought she could distinguish the color of his furniture, which seemed to her red. The chimney above his roof was sending up a thick column of smoke.

“While all the world sleeps, he wakes — like God,” she said to herself.

The education of young girls involves so many serious problems (for the future of a nation lies in the hands of mothers) that the University of France has long resigned the duty of thinking of it. Here, for instance, is one of those problems: Should young girls be enlightened? Should their minds be repressed? It is unnecessary to say that religious education means repression. If you enlighten them you make them demons before their time; if you repress them and prevent them from thinking, you meet with sudden explosions, which Molière has so well described in his *Agnes*, and

you put that repressed mind, so fresh, so perspicacious, rapid, and consecutive (like that of a savage), at the mercy of some event, like the fatal crisis produced in Mademoiselle de Watteville by the imprudent picture drawn at the dinner-table by the most prudent of the abbés of the prudent Chapter of Besançon.

The next morning, as Mademoiselle de Watteville was dressing, she naturally watched Albert Savaron, who was walking in the garden which adjoined that of the hôtel de Rupt.

“What would have become of me,” she thought, “had he lived elsewhere? Here I can at least see him. What is he thinking of?”

After seeing, at a distance, this remarkable man, the only man whose individuality seemed to vigorously produce itself above the mass of persons whom she had hitherto known, Rosalie jumped to the idea of penetrating his private life, finding out the reasons of so much mystery, hearing that eloquent voice, obtaining the glance of those wonderful eyes. She wanted all, but how could she obtain it?

During the day, she worked at her embroidery with the obtuse attention of a young girl who (like Molière's Agnes) appears to think of nothing, all the while reflecting so deeply that her schemes prove infallible. The result of Rosalie's profound meditation was a desire to confess. Accordingly, the next morning she

had a little conference at Saint-Pierre with the Abbé Giroud, and cajoled him so cleverly that her confession was appointed for Sunday morning at a quarter past eight during the eight o'clock mass. She told a dozen fibs in order to be in the church, only once, at the hour when the lawyer heard mass. Then a spasm of excessive fondness for her father seized her. She went to see him in his workshop; asked him many questions about his turning—all for the purpose of advising him to do larger things, columns for instance. Having put columns into his head—one of the noted difficulties of the art of turning—she advised him to take advantage of a mound of stones in the garden to make a grotto, and on that to erect a little temple, like a belvedere, round which his columns would be an object of admiration to all the town.

In the midst of the joy which such an idea infused into the mind of the poor, unoccupied man, Rosalie took occasion to say as she kissed him, “Be sure not to tell my mother that I suggested the plan. She would scold me.”

“Don’t be uneasy about that,” replied Monsieur de Watteville, who groaned like his daughter under the terrible oppression of the descendant of the de Rupts.

Thus Rosalie secured the building of a charming observatory from which to look into the lawyer’s study. There are men for whom young girls are capable of the

like masterpieces of diplomacy, who, like Albert Savaron, never suspect it.

Sunday morning, so impatiently awaited, came at last. Rosalie's toilet was performed with a nicety which made Mariette, the lady's maid of Mme. and Mlle. de Watteville, smile.

"I never saw Mademoiselle so particular before," she remarked.

"I have observed," said Rosalie, with a glance at Mariette which sent the color into the woman's cheeks, "that there are certain days when you are more particular than on others."

As she left the portico, crossed the courtyard, passed through the gate, and walked along the street, Rosalie's heart beat vehemently, as all hearts do when they foresee some great event. She had never known till then what it was to walk in the streets; for a moment she fancied her mother must see her plans in her face, and would forbid her to go to confession. She felt a new blood tingling in her feet, and lifted them as though they were stepping on fire. She had, naturally, made the appointment with the confessor at a quarter past eight, but she had told her mother it was at eight, so as to have a quarter of an hour to remain near Albert. She reached the church before the mass began, and after making a short prayer she went to see if the Abbé Giroud was in the confessional, for the sole pur-

pose of loitering about the church and placing herself where she could be sure of seeing Albert as he entered the church.

A man must be atrociously ugly not to seem handsome under the circumstances in which Mademoiselle de Watteville's curiosity placed him. Albert Savaron — really remarkable — made all the more impression on Rosalie because his action, carriage, attitude, even his clothing, bore signs of something which it is difficult to explain except by the word *mysterious*. He entered. The church, dark until then, seemed to Rosalie illuminated. She was fascinated by his slow movements, solemn as those of men who bear the world on their shoulders, whose look and gesture express either a devastating or a dominating thought. Looking at him, Rosalie understood the words of the vicar-general to their fullest extent. Yes, those brown eyes, flecked with gold, veiled an ardor of the soul which betrayed itself in sudden flashes. Rosalie, with an imprudence which was not lost on Mariette, put herself in the lawyer's way so that he was forced to exchange a look with her, — a look which convulsed her blood and made it throb and boil as if its heat were doubled. As soon as Albert was seated Mademoiselle de Watteville chose her place from which she could see him during the time before she entered the confessional, When Mariette said to her, "There is Monsieur Giroud!" it seemed

to Rosalie as if only a moment had elapsed. When she left the confessional, mass was over, and the lawyer had left the church.

“The vicar-general was right,” she thought, — “*he* suffers. Why should that eagle — for he has indeed an eagle’s eye — why should he light at Besançon? Oh, I must know all — but how can I?”

Under the compulsion of this new desire, Rosalie set her stitches with more than usual exactitude, and concealed her secret thoughts beneath an air of innocence which played simplicity and deceived even Madame de Watteville. Since that Sunday morning when Mademoiselle de Watteville received the lawyer’s glance, or, to describe it otherwise, her baptism of fire, — magnificent expression of Napoleon which may well serve in love, — she was eager in promoting the kiosk.

“Mamma,” she said, as soon as two columns were ready, “papa has taken a singular idea into his head; he is turning columns for a kiosk, which he wants to erect on that pile of stones in the middle of the garden. Do you approve of that? As for me, I think —”

“I approve of all your father does,” replied Madame de Watteville, curtly. “It is the duty of wives to submit to their husbands, even if they do not agree with their ideas. Why should I oppose an unimportant thing if it amuses your father?”

"Only because we shall overlook Monsieur de Soulas, and Monsieur de Soulas could see us when we are there, and people might say —"

"Rosalie, are you assuming to guide your parents, and to know more than they do of life and its proprieties?"

"I will say no more, mamma. After all, papa says the grotto will be a nice cool place, where we can take our coffee."

"Your father is full of excellent ideas," replied Madame de Watteville, who at once went to see the columns.

She gave her approbation to the plan, and advised her husband to erect his kiosk at the farther end of the garden, where it could not be overlooked by Monsieur de Soulas, while, on the other hand, it had a fine view into the windows of Monsieur Savaron. A contractor was employed to make the grotto, on the summit of which was to stand the kiosk, reached by a little path, three feet wide, and bordered among the rocks with periwinkle, iris, viburnum, ivy, honeysuckle, and the wild grape. The baroness suggested lining the interior with rustic woodwork (then in fashion for flower-stands), and putting a mirror at the lower end, a divan with cushions, and a rustic table with the bark on it. Monsieur de Soulas advised an asphalt floor. Rosalie proposed a hanging lamp, also in rustic woods.

"The Watteville's are doing something charming in their garden," said Besançon.

"They are rich, — they can afford two or three thousand francs for a fancy."

"Two or three thousand francs!" cried Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Yes, at least that much," said young Monsieur de Soulas; "they have sent to Paris for a man to do the rustic work, and it will certainly be charming. Monsieur de Watteville means to make the lamp himself, — he is already carving the frame."

"They say that Berquet is digging a cave."

"No," said young Monsieur de Soulas, "he is only securing the kiosk to the grotto with mortar so as to prevent all dampness."

"You seem to know everything that goes on in that house," said Madame de Chavoncourt, with some sourness, as she glanced at one of her tall girls, who had been marriageable for the last year.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, feeling some little emotion of pride in thinking of the success of her kiosk, now regarded herself as possessing a decided superiority over all those about her. No one imagined that a girl, hitherto thought silly and with no mind at all, had produced this result from a wish to see into the study of Monsieur Albert Savaron.

The brilliant speech of the lawyer on behalf of the

Chapter of the cathedral was forgotten all the sooner because it roused the jealousy of the other lawyers. Besides which, faithful to his desire for seclusion, Savaron went nowhere and was never seen. Without friends to proclaim him, and visiting no one, he increased the chances of oblivion which in a town like Besançon abound for strangers. He did, however, argue three times before the court of commerce in knotty cases which were likely to be carried to the upper court. In one, his clients were four of the wealthiest merchants of the place, who recognized his sound sense and what the provinces call "judicial mind," and trusted him with all their litigations.

The day on which the Wattevelles inaugurated their kiosk Savaron raised a monument to himself in his own way. He founded a fortnightly review which he called the "*Revue de l'Est*," thanks to the support of the above-named merchants and their friends, and on the strength of forty shares taken at five hundred francs apiece, the money being placed in the hands of the first ten subscribers whom he had induced to take this step with a view of benefiting the future of Besançon,—a town which should be made the chief stopping-place between Mulhausen and the Rhone. To rival Strasburg, he said, Besançon ought to be as much a centre of intelligence as of commerce. A periodical was the only means of openly discussing

the important questions relating to the interests of the East. What glory it would be to snatch from Strasburg and Dijon their literary influence, to enlighten the East of France, and to emulate Parisian centralization. These considerations suggested by Albert were put forth by his ten shareholders as their own.

Savaron did not commit the blunder of putting his own name to the enterprise. He left the financial management to his first client, Monsieur Boucher, who was connected through his wife with one of the leading publishers of ecclesiastical literature ; but he held the editing in his own hands, together with a share in the business as its originator. The management called for the assistance of all the adjacent towns, Dôle, Dijon, Salins, Neufchâtel, in the Jura, Bourg, Nantua, and Lons-le-Saulnier. Not only this, but they asked for the efforts and advice of all studious men in the three provinces of Bugey, Bresse, and La Comté. Five hundred subscribers were obtained in consequence of the low price of the review, — only eight francs quarterly. To avoid wounding provincial susceptibilities by the refusal of articles, Savaron had the wit to make the eldest son of the business manager, Monsieur Boucher, desire the place of literary director. This young man, who was only twenty-two and eager for fame, knew nothing as yet of the pitfalls or the annoyances of literary management. Nevertheless, Savaron secretly held the reins, and

Alfred Boucher was really his subordinate. Alfred was the only person in Besançon with whom the hero of the bar became familiar. Young Boucher called daily to confer with him as he walked round the garden in the morning. It is needless to say that the initial number of the review contained a "Meditation" by Alfred, which elicited Savaron's approval. In his conversations with Alfred, Albert let drop fine ideas and subjects for articles, by which young Boucher profited; he felt he had a mine to work in the great man, for to him Albert was a man of genius and a profound statesman. The merchants, delighted with the success of their review, were not obliged to deposit more than three tenths of their shares. Two hundred more subscribers and the enterprise would pay five per cent to its stockholders; for no salary was paid to the editor — his services, in fact, could not be compensated in money.

By the third number the Review had obtained exchanges with nearly all the French newspapers, which Albert could then read in his own home. This third number contained a novel signed "A. S.," and attributed to the lawyer himself. Notwithstanding the very slight attention which the highest society in Besançon accorded to this review, which was accused of liberalism, some one happened to mention at Madame de Chavoncourt's, one evening in midwinter, that it

contained the first novel ever brought out in La Comté.

“Papa,” said Rosalie the next day, “there is a review published in Besançon; you ought to subscribe to it. Keep it in your own room, for mamma would not let me read it; but you will lend it to me.”

Anxious to please his dear Rosalie, who for the last five months had given him many proofs of filial tenderness, Monsieur de Watteville went himself to subscribe for the “*Revue de l’Est*,” and lent the first four numbers to his daughter. During the night Rosalie devoured the novel, the first she had ever read in her life—but she felt that she had never lived until within the last few months. We must therefore not judge of the effect the tale produced on her by any ordinary principles. Without prejudging either way the merits of this production from the pen of a Parisian who brought into the provinces the manner, and, if you choose, the brilliancy of the new school of writers, it could not fail to seem a masterpiece to a young girl applying her virgin mind and a pure heart to the study of a first work of this kind. Besides, from something she had heard, an intuition, an idea, had come to her, which greatly enhanced in her eyes the value of this novel. She expected to find the sentiments and perhaps something of the life of Albert himself in it. This expectation was so fully confirmed from the very first pages that

after reading the whole fragment she felt certain she was not mistaken.

Here follows the tale in which, according to the critics of the salon Chavoncourt, Albert had imitated certain modern writers, who, for want of invention, relate their own joys and sorrows and the mysterious events of their personal lives.

II.

AMBITIOUS THROUGH LOVE.

IN 1823 two young men who had planned a journey through Switzerland started from Lucerne one fine morning in the month of July in a boat with three rowers. They were going to Fluelen, intending to stop on the way at all the points of interest on the Lake of the Four-Cantons. The various landscapes which from Lucerne to Fluelen surround the water offer every combination of beauty which the most exacting imagination can demand of mountains, rivers, rocks or rivulets, verdure, trees, and torrents. Here, stern solitude and graceful promontories, smiling and coquettish country-places; there, forests hanging like a plume from the vertical granite, lonely and refreshing inlets opening into valleys, the treasures of which seem enhanced by the dreamy distance.

As they passed before the charming village of Gersau, one of the two friends looked long at a wooden house lately built, inclosed by a palisade, standing on a promontory and almost bathed by the lake. As the boat passed it, a woman's head was lifted in the inte-

rior of a room on the upper story of the house, as if to enjoy the sight of a boat upon the lake. One of the young men received the glance carelessly cast by the unknown woman.

“Let us stop here,” he said to his friend; “we intended to make Lucerne the headquarters for our excursions about Switzerland. You will not mind, Léopold, if I change my mind and remain here in charge of the portmanteaus? You can make the trips alone; as for me, I shall stay here. Boatmen, put us ashore at the village; we shall breakfast there. I will go back to Lucerne and fetch our bags and baggage,” he continued, “and you shall know before you go further the house I lodge in, where you will find me on your return.”

“Here or at Lucerne,” said Léopold, “there is so little difference I won’t hinder you from following a caprice.”

The two young men were friends in the true acceptance of the word. They were of the same age, they had gone to the same college; after finishing their law-studies, they were now employing their vacation in the classic journey through Switzerland. By his father’s efforts and will, Léopold was already promised the practice of a notary in Paris. His upright nature, his gentleness, the calmness of his senses, and his intelligence guaranteed his acquiescence in his father’s wish.

He saw himself a notary ; his life lay before him like one of those straight roads which cross the plains of France ; he viewed it to its full extent with a resignation that was full of philosophy.

The character of his companion, whom we shall call Rodolphe, presented a contrast to his own, which no doubt strengthened the tie that united them. Rodolphe was the natural son of a great seigneur, who was overtaken by sudden death before he could make proper provision for a woman whom he tenderly loved and for his son. Thus betrayed by fate, Rodolphe's mother had recourse to heroic measures. She sold all she had received from the father of her child for about one hundred thousand francs or rather more, and bought with this sum an annuity for her life at a heavy rate ; thus obtaining an income of some fifteen thousand francs. She determined to devote all to the education of her son, in order to give him the personal advantages that would enable him to make his own way in life, and she also resolved to lay by yearly enough to give him a small capital when he reached his majority. It was a bold measure ; it was counting on her own life ; but without this courage it would have been impossible for the good mother to live and properly educate her son, her only hope, her future, the sole source to her of happiness. Born of a charming Parisian woman and a man distinguished among the Brabantian nobility, the

fruit of a mutual passion, Rodolphe was afflicted with extreme sensibility. From his infancy he had shown excessive ardor in everything. In him, desires had supreme force and were the motive of his whole being, the stimulus of his imagination, the reason of his actions. Notwithstanding the efforts of an intelligent mother, who was frightened when she perceived these tendencies, Rodolphe desired as a poet imagines, as the man of science calculates, as a painter sketches, as a musician modulates his melodies. Tender, like his mother, he rushed violently in thought towards the object wished for; he annihilated time; while dreaming of the accomplishment of his wishes he suppressed all thought of the means of execution. "When my son has children," said his mother, "he will expect them to be grown-up at once." This fine ardor, carefully directed, enabled Rodolphe to study with brilliant results, and to become what the English call "a perfect gentleman." His mother was proud of him, all the while fearing some catastrophe if a passion should ever fasten upon that heart so tender and so sensitive, so violent and so kind. Therefore the prudent woman had encouraged the friendship that bound Léopold to Rodolphe and Rodolphe to Léopold; seeing as she did in the calm and faithful notary a guardian and a confidential friend who might to some extent replace her should she unhappily be called away. She was still

beautiful at forty-five years of age, and Léopold felt for her an ardent attachment, which drew the young men still closer together.

Léopold, who knew Rodolphe well, was not surprised to find him, as the result of a single glance cast upon a certain house, resolved on stopping short at Gersau and relinquishing their projected excursion to the Saint-Gotthard. While breakfast was being prepared for them at the little inn of La Cygne, the two friends walked about the village, and reached the neighborhood of the new house, where, by loitering about and talking with the inhabitants, Rodolphe discovered a neighboring house, the owners of which were willing to take him to board, according to a prevailing custom in Switzerland. They offered him a room looking on the water and the mountains, from which could be seen one of those magnificent sweeps of the lake of the Four-Cantons which are the admiration of all travellers. This house was divided by a small square and a little wharf from the new house where Rodolphe had seen the face of his beautiful unknown.

For one hundred francs a month Rodolphe was to have no thought about the necessities of life. But, in consideration of the outlays required, the Stopfers, who owned the house, required him to pay the third month in advance. Rub a Swiss, and you will find a usurer. Breakfast over, Rodolphe installed himself at once;

bringing to his room all the effects he was taking for his excursion to the Saint-Gotthard, after which he saw Léopold off on the trip which, in obedience to the arranged plan, the latter now took for himself and his friend. When Rodolphe, sitting on a rock that had rolled to the shore, could no longer see the boat which carried Léopold, he began to examine furtively the new house, in hopes of catching sight of the lady. Alas ! he was compelled to return home without detecting any signs of life. At dinner-time he asked Monsieur and Madame Stopfer about the environs, and ended by learning all he wanted to know, thanks to the loquacity of his hosts, who were ready, without being asked, to empty their bag of gossip.

The unknown lady was called Miss Fanny Lovelace. This name belongs to an old English family, though Richardson used it for a creation which has dwarfed all its other distinctions. Miss Lovelace was living on the lake for her father's health ; the physicians had ordered him to the canton of Lucerne. They had arrived without any servant excepting a little girl of fourteen, a mute, who was much attached to Miss Fanny, on whom she waited intelligently. The Lovelaces had hired their apartment the winter before from Monsieur and Madame Bergmann, — the husband formerly head-gardener to his Excellency Comte Borromeo at Isola Bella and Isola Madre on the Lago Maggiore. These

people, who were well-to-do, had let the upper part of their house to the Lovelaces for two hundred francs a year for two years. Old Mr. Lovelace, an octogenarian, and very feeble, — too poor to incur certain expenses, — seldom went out. His daughter supported him by translating English works and writing books herself, so it was said. The Lovelaces never allowed themselves to hire boats on the lake, nor horses, nor guides to show them the environs. A poverty which compels such privations excites the compassion of the Swiss all the more because it touches their source of gain. The Bergmann's cook fed the three English people for one hundred francs a month, everything included. But it was believed throughout Gersau that the Bergmanns, in spite of their pretensions to belong to the bourgeoisie, were really hidden under the name of their cook and took the profits for themselves. The former gardener and his wife had made beautiful gardens around their place, and a fine greenhouse. The flowers, the fruits, and the rare botanical treasures, had determined Miss Lovelace to choose that house when she first came to Gersau. She was said to be nineteen years old, — the last child of the old man, who idolized her. About two months ago she sent to Lucerne for a piano; she was infatuated about music.

“She loves flowers and music,” thought Rodolphe, “and not married — what happiness!”

The next day Rodolphe asked permission to look at the greenhouse and walk round the gardens, which were beginning to have a public celebrity. The permission was not given immediately ; the old gardener, strangely enough, requested to see Rodolphe's passport, which was sent over at once. The passport was brought back the next day by the cook, who informed him that her master and mistress would be pleased to show him their establishment. Rodolphe did not go to the house without a certain quivering of the flesh known only to persons of keen susceptibilities, who develop in a moment as many emotions as some other men put into their whole lives. Dressed with care to impress the gardeners, — for he saw in them the guardians of his treasure, — he walked about the gardens, looking now and then at the house, though cautiously, for the two owners evidently regarded him with distrust. His attention was soon excited by the little dumb girl, whom his natural sagacity, though still immature, made him recognize at once as Moorish, or, at any rate, Sicilian. The girl had the golden brown skin of an Havana cigar, eyes of fire, Armenian eyelids with lashes of a length that was wholly un-Britannic ; hair that was more than black, and beneath that olive skin nerves of extraordinary strength and feverish excitability. She cast inquisitorial glances, of startling boldness, at Rodolphe, and watched his every movement.

“To whom does that little Moor belong?” he asked of the worthy Madame Bergmann.

“To the English people,” replied Monsieur Bergmann.

“She was never born in England.”

“Perhaps they brought her from the Indies,” said Madame Bergmann.

“They tell me Miss Lovelace is fond of music; I should be enchanted if, during my stay at the lake which is ordered by my physician, she would allow me to play or sing with her.”

“They neither receive nor wish to know any one,” said the old gardener.

Rodolphe bit his lips, and left the gardens, without having been invited to enter the house, nor shown over that part of the garden which lay between the front of the house and the lake. On this side the house had a wooden gallery above the first floor, covered by a roof which projected far, like the roof of a *châlet*, and went round the four sides of the house in the Swiss fashion. Rodolphe had praised this convenient construction, and remarked on the beauty of the view from the gallery; but all in vain. When he had bowed to the Bergmanns and departed he felt a fool in his own eyes, like any other man of mind and imagination balked by the ill-success of a plan on which he had counted.

That evening he went out in a boat on the lake,

skirted the promontory, and rowed as far as Brünnen and Schwitz, returning at dusk. From afar he could see *her* window, open and brilliantly lighted, and he could hear the sound of a piano and the tones of a delightful voice. He stopped the boatman, that he might yield himself wholly up to the charm of listening to an Italian air divinely sung. When the song ceased, Rodolphe landed on the promontory and sent away the boat and the two boatmen. At the risk of wetting his feet, he sat down on the granite wall worn by the water, behind which was a thick hedge of the thorny acacia, flanked on its other side by a long avenue of young lindens, which ran the whole length of the Bergmanns' garden. After an hour's waiting he heard persons walking and talking just above him, but the words which reached his ear were Italian, spoken by two young female voices. He profited by the moment when the pair reached the extremity of the path to force his way to the other end of it without noise. After much effort he succeeded, and took up a position where, without being perceived or heard, he could see the two women as they came towards him.

What was Rodolphe's astonishment to find the dumb girl one of the two women. She was speaking Italian with Miss Lovelace! It was eleven o'clock at night. The stillness was so perfect upon the lake and around the house that the women must have felt themselves in

safety ; in all Gersau there were no eyes open but theirs. Rodolphe thought the pretended dumbness of the little girl might be some necessary precaution. By the way they spoke Italian he was convinced it was the mother-tongue of both of them, and he concluded that the fiction of their being English covered some purpose.

“They are Italian refugees,” he thought, “exiles who fear the police of Austria or Sardinia. The young girl waits for night to take her exercise and to talk in safety.”

He lay down beside the hedge and crawled like a snake till he could force a passage between the stems of the acacias. At the risk of leaving his coat on the thorns and inflicting serious wounds on his back he crept through the hedge just as the pretended English girl and her pretended dumb attendant were at the other end of the alley. Then when they turned and came within twenty feet of him without seeing him (for he was in the shadow of the hedge, against which the moon was shining brightly) he suddenly rose to his feet.

“Fear nothing,” said Rodolphe in French to the one called Miss Lovelace. “I am not a spy. You are refugees ; I have guessed it. I am a Frenchman, held at Gersau by one look out of your eyes.”

He suddenly felt a sharp pain from some instrument which stabbed his side, and he fell to the ground.

“Nel lago!” cried the terrible dumb girl.

“Ah, Gina!” exclaimed her mistress.

“She missed me,” said Rodolphe, pulling the stiletto from the wound, where it had merely struck the ribs; “a little higher and it would have reached my heart. I did wrong, Francesca,” he said using the name he had heard the little girl pronounce. “I am not angry with her; do not blame her; the happiness of speaking to you is cheaply earned with a stab like this — but show me the way out, I must get back to the Stopfers’ house. Don’t be afraid, I will not say a word about it.”

Francesca, recovering from her astonishment, helped Rodolphe to rise, and said a few words to Gina which filled her eyes with tears. The two women forced Rodolphe to sit down on a bench and take off his coat, waistcoat, and cravat. Gina opened his shirt and sucked the wound. Francesca, who had left them, returned with a large piece of plaster with which she strapped the wound.

“You will be able to get home now,” she said.

They each took an arm and led Rodolphe to a little gate in the garden, the key of which Francesca produced from the pocket of her apron.

“Does Gina speak French?” said Rodolphe to Francesca.

“No. But don’t excite yourself,” said Francesca, with an impatient little air.

“Let me see you,” replied Rodolphe; “because it may be long before I can come again —”

He leaned against one of the gate-posts and looked at the beautiful Italian, who allowed him to do so for an instant amid the stillest silence and the finest night that ever beautified that lake, the monarch of all Swiss lakes. Francesca was indeed a classical Italian, and all that the imagination expects, waking or dreaming, that an Italian woman should be. The first thing that struck Rodolphe was the elegance and grace of her figure, the vigor of which was quite apparent in spite of her slender appearance, so supple was she. An amber paleness which overspread her face told of the sudden excitement she had felt, but it did not conflict with the glow of the liquid eyes, which were black and tender. Two hands — the most beautiful hands that ever a Greek sculptor attached to the polished arms of a statue — held Rodolphe’s arm, and their white contrasted with the dark color of his coat. He only caught a glimpse of the rather long oval of her face, with its grieved mouth showing the dazzling teeth between full lips that were fresh and rosy. The beauty of the lines of the face guaranteed to Francesca the continuance of her splendor; but what struck Rodolphe more than anything was the adorable ease and freedom, the Italian frankness of this woman, who yielded herself wholly to the impulse of her compassion.

Francesca said a word to Gina, who gave an arm to Rodolphe and led him to the Stopfers' house; once there, she rang the bell and fled away like a swallow.

"These patriots strike home," thought Rodolphe, beginning to feel his sufferings when he was alone and in his bed. "'Nel lago!' Gina would have flung me into the lake with a stone round my neck!"

Early next morning he sent to Lucerne for the best surgeon, and when he came swore him to secrecy on the ground that his honor required it. Léopold got back from his excursion on the day his friend left his bed. Rodolphe invented a tale and sent him to Lucerne to fetch their baggage and letters. Léopold returned with fatal news; Rodolphe's mother was dead. While the two friends were travelling from Bâle to Lucerne the mournful tidings were written by Léopold's father, and reached Lucerne on the day they started for Fluelen. In spite of all Léopold's precautions Rodolphe was seized with a nervous fever. As soon as the future notary saw his friend out of danger, he started for France, furnished with a power of attorney. Rodolphe could thus remain at Gersau, the only spot where his grief might be soothed. The situation of the young Frenchman, his illness, his despair, and the circumstances which made the loss so much worse for him than for many others, became known and won for him the compassion and interest of all Gersau. Every

morning the so-called dumb girl came to see the Frenchman and carry news of him to her mistress.

When Rodolphe was able to go out he went to the Bergmanns' house to thank Miss Fanny Lovelace and her father for the interest they had shown in his illness and sorrow. For the first time since the old Italian had come to live at the Bergmanns' he allowed a stranger to enter his abode, where Rodolphe was now received with a cordiality due to his misfortunes and the fact that he was a Frenchman, which excluded all distrust of his motives. Francesca was so beautiful that evening by candlelight that a ray of brightness entered his despondent heart. Her smiles were the roses of hope cast on his mourning. She sang, not lively airs, but grave, sublime melodies in harmony with Rodolphe's state of mind; and this kind care he noticed. Towards eight o'clock the old man left the two young people together, without any appearance of distrust, and went to his own room. When Francesca was tired of singing she took Rodolphe to the outer gallery, before which lay the glorious panorama of the lake, and made him a sign to sit beside her on a rustic wooden seat.

"Is there any indiscretion in asking your age, *cara* Francesca?" said the young man.

"Nineteen," she said, "my last birthday."

"If anything in the world could lessen my grief," he said, "it would be to obtain you from your father,

in whatever position in life you may be. Beautiful as you are, you seem to me of more worth than the daughters of princes; therefore I tremble in making this avowal of the feelings you have inspired in me. But they are deep,—they are eternal.”

“Hush!” said Francesca, laying a finger of her right hand on her lips; “say no more; I am not free; I am married—for the last three years.”

A deep silence ensued for the next few minutes. When the Italian, frightened by Rodolphe’s attitude, looked closely at him, she saw that he had fainted.

“Povero!” she said, “and I thought him cold!”

She went to fetch some salts, which revived him.

“Married!” he said, looking at Francesca, and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

“Child!” she said, smiling, “there is hope. My husband is—”

“Eighty!” cried Rodolphe.

“No,” she answered, laughing,—“sixty-five. He pretends to be old to mislead the police.”

“Dear Francesca,” said Rodolphe, “a few more such emotions and they would kill me. Twenty years’ knowledge of me would not show you the strength and power of my heart, nor the nature of my aspirations towards happiness. That plant”—pointing to a Virginia jessamine which was climbing the balustrade—“does not stretch upward with more eagerness to blos-

som in the sunshine than I to you during this last month. I love you with a love unlike all other love. It will be forever the secret mainspring of my being — I may even die of it !”

“ Oh, Frenchman, Frenchman !” she exclaimed, pointing her exclamation with a little pout of incredulity.”

“ I will wait for you, and win you from the hand of Time,” he said, gravely. “ But know this ; if you are sincere in the expression that has just escaped you, I will wait for you faithfully, and never shall another sentiment enter my heart.”

She looked at him doubtingly.

“ None — not the merest fancy,” he went on. “ I have my way to make in the world ; a noble fortune must be yours, — nature has created you a princess — ”

Francesca could not restrain the flicker of a smile, which gave a ravishing expression to her face, — a look of delicate and sensitive meaning, such as the grand Leonardo has given to his Gioconda. That smile made Rodolphe pause.

“ Yes,” he resumed, “ you must have suffered deeply from the privations of exile. Ah ! if you are willing to make me the happiest of men and sanctify my love, treat me as a friend — let me *be* your friend. My poor mother has left me sixty thousand francs of her savings — take half.”

Francesca looked at him fixedly. That piercing look went to the bottom of his soul.

“We want for nothing; my work is enough for all our needs,” she answered in a grave voice.

“I cannot endure that you should work!” he cried. “Some day you will return to your own country, and recover what you have left there —”

Again the young Italian looked at him.

“And you can pay me all you deign to borrow,” he added, with a look full of delicacy.

“Let us change the subject,” she said, with an incomparable dignity of look and manner and gesture. “Make yourself a brilliant career; be one of the remarkable men of your country; I wish it. Fame is a drawbridge by which to cross a gulf. Be ambitious; you must be. I believe you have high and powerful faculties. But — employ them more for the benefit of humanity than to win me: you will seem the greater in my eyes.”

In this conversation, which lasted two hours, Rodolphe discovered in Francesca that enthusiasm for liberal ideas and the worship of liberty which made the triple revolution of Naples, Piedmont, and Spain. When he left her, Gina conducted him to the gate. It was eleven o'clock; no one was stirring in the village, and no inquisitive eyes were to be feared. Rodolphe drew Gina into a corner and said, in a low voice and

bad Italian: "Who are your masters, my child? Tell me, and I will give you this new bit of gold."

"Monsieur," said the child, taking the money, "my master is the famous bookseller Lamporani of Milan, one of the heads of the revolution, — a conspirator whom Austria wants to put in the Spielberg."

"Wife of a bookseller!" thought Rodolphe. "So much the better; then we are equals. "What family does your mistress come from?" he asked aloud; "she has the manner of a queen."

"All Italian women are like that," replied Gina, proudly; "her father's name is Colonna."

Emboldened by Francesca's humble station in life, Rodolphe ordered cushions and an awning for his boat. When these were ready he asked Francesca to go out with him on the lake. She accepted at once, perhaps to keep up her part as a young English lady in the eyes of the villagers; but she took Gina with her. Every action of Francesca Colonna bore the signs of a superior education and of the highest social rank. Even the manner in which she took her seat at the stern of the boat made Rodolphe feel in some sort separated from her; and in presence of that proud consciousness of nobility his premeditated familiarity vanished. By a mere look Francesca made herself a princess, with all the privileges she might have enjoyed in the middle-ages. She seemed to have guessed the secret thoughts of the

vassal who had had the boldness to make himself her protector. Already, in the arrangement of the salon where Francesca had received him, in her dress, in the little articles she used, Rodolphe had noticed the signs of a fastidious nature and great wealth. All these observations returned to his mind, and he became thoughtful, after being, as it were, repulsed by Francesca's dignity. Gina, who was scarcely more than a child, seemed to have a mocking expression as she glanced sideways or beneath her eyelids at Rodolphe. This visible discrepancy between the position of the Italian and her manners was a new enigma to Rodolphe, who began to suspect Gina of another trick like that of her false dumbness.

“Which way will you go, *Signora Lamporani?*” he asked.

“Towards Lucerne,” replied Francesca in French.

“At any rate,” thought Rodolphe, “she is not surprised to hear me call her by name; she must know that I questioned that sly Gina. “Have you anything against me?” he asked, sitting down at last beside her, and offering to take her hand, which Francesca drew back. “You are cold and ceremonious; what we call in conversation *cutting*.”

“Very true,” she replied, smiling. “I am to blame. It is not right. It is bourgeois. I had much better explain myself than suffer cold or hostile feelings to

grow up against a friend — for you have proved your friendship for me. Perhaps I have gone too far with you. You must have taken me for an ordinary woman.” Rodolphe made sign after sign of denial. “Yes,” said the bookseller’s wife, paying no attention to the pantomime which she saw plainly, “I perceived it, and I change my course, naturally. I shall end all this with a few words that are profoundly true. I wish you to understand me, Rodolphe; I have in me the strength to extinguish a feeling which would not be in harmony with the ideas or the intuitions that I have of true love. I could love as we love in Italy, but I know my duty; no infatuation could make me forget it. I was married without my consent to that poor old man, and I am at liberty to use the freedom he so generously gives me; but three years of married life have made me accept the conjugal yoke. Nothing, not the most ardent passion, could ever make me express, even involuntarily, a desire for freedom. Emilio knows my character. He knows that, excepting my heart, which is mine to dispose of as I please, I will never let any one so much as take my hand. That is why I refused it to you just now. I wish to be loved, to be waited for with fidelity, nobleness of heart, ardor, with no return but an infinite tenderness, the expression of which will never go farther than the words of my heart, where it has the right to live. If all this can be thoroughly

understood — oh then !” she cried with a girlish gesture, “ I will be smiling and coquettish and gay as a child which knows no danger.”

This plain declaration, made so frankly, was said with a tone, an accent, a look, which gave it the impress of the deepest truth.

“ A Princess Colonna could not make known her wishes better,” said Rodolphe, smiling.

“ Is that,” she said haughtily, “ a slur upon the humbleness of my birth? Must you have a coat-of-arms for your love? The noblest names are over the shops in Milan, — Sforza, Canova, Visconti, Trivulzio, Ursini; there’s an apothecary named Archinto. But you may indeed believe, in spite of my position as a shopkeeper’s wife, that I have the sentiments of a duchess.”

“ A slur? no, madame, I meant to praise you.”

“ By a comparison?” she said, quickly.

“ Ah! believe,” he cried, “ and torture me no more. If my words should ill-express my feelings, believe that my love is absolute, and carries with it obedience and infinite respect.”

She bowed her head as if satisfied and said: “ Then you accept the treaty?”

“ Yes,” he said. “ I can understand how in the rich and powerful organization of a woman the faculty of loving can never be lost, but, through delicacy of

conscience, you restrain it. Ah! Francesca, a mutual tenderness, at my age and with a woman so sublimely, royally beautiful—why, that is the crown of all desires! To love you as you wish to be loved—is not that to preserve a young man from every folly? does not that mean using all his powers in a noble passion of which they may both be proud some day—a love which can give none but glorious memories? Ah! if you did but know with what colors, what poesy you invest that high Pilatus, that Rigi, this magnificent lake—”

“I wish to know it,” she said, with the Italian naïveté which is always tinged with a little guile.

“Well, know it then! this hour will shine upon my life forever as a diamond on the brow of a queen.”

For all answer Francesca laid her hand on his.

“Oh dearest, forever dear,” he cried, “tell me, have you ever loved?”

“Never.”

“And you will let me love you nobly, awaiting the future from heaven?” he asked.

She bowed her head gently. Two heavy tears fell from Rodolphe’s eyes.

“What pains you?” she said quickly, laying aside her imperial manner.

“Would that my mother were here to see that I am happy; she has left this earth without knowing that which would have comforted her last hours.”



“Knowing what?” she asked.

“That her tenderness was replaced by another equal to it.”

“Povero mio!” said the Italian, much moved. Then, after a pause, she added: “It is, believe me, a very tender thing and a very constraining influence to fidelity, for a woman to know herself the all on earth to one she loves, to know he is alone, without family, without any thought in his heart except his love, which is hers only.”

When two hearts thus understand each other a delightful stillness fills them, a divine tranquillity. Certainty is the basis which all sentiments desire; a basis never lacking to religious feeling; man is certain of his reward from God. Human love knows that its only security lies in its likeness to the divine love. A man must have deeply experienced these delights to understand the joy of this moment — always the only one of its kind in life; it returns, alas! no more than the emotions of our youth return. To believe in a woman; to make her his earthly religion, the essence of his being, the secret light upon his every thought! — is not that to be born again? A young man mingles this love with the feeling he has had for his mother.

Rodolphe and Francesca were silent for a long time, answering each other mutely with friendly looks that were full of thoughts. They understood each in the

midst of that most lovely scene of Nature, the glories of which, explained by those of their own hearts, helped them to engrave upon their memory the fleeting impression of that sole, irreplaceable moment of their lives. In Francesca's conduct there was not the faintest trace of coquetry. All was noble, grand, without one lesser thought. The grandeur keenly affected Rodolphe, who recognized therein the difference that distinguishes the Italian woman from the Frenchwoman. All things about him were grand and also tender, — the water, the earth, the sky, the woman, even their love in the midst of that vast picture rich in details, where the clear-cut lines of the snowy peaks resting upon the sky reminded Rodolphe of the conditions on which he possessed his happiness, — a rich land circled with snow.

This gentle intoxication of their souls was soon disturbed. A boat approached them, coming from Lucerne. Gina, who had been watching it for some time with deep attention, made a sudden gesture of joy, but was faithful to her rôle of dumbness. The boat came nearer; Francesca distinguished a face in it. "Tito!" she cried, recognizing a young man. She rose, and stood up in the boat, at the risk of losing her balance.

"Tito! Tito!" she cried, waving her handkerchief.

Tito gave an order to his men, and the two boats

ranged side by side. Francesca and the stranger then spoke to each other with such eagerness, and in a dialect so incomprehensible to a man who scarcely knew the Italian of books and had never been in Italy, that Rodolphe could neither understand nor guess the subject of conversation. Tito's beauty, Francesca's familiarity, Gina's look of joy, all distressed him. Besides, was there ever a lover who is not annoyed when he finds himself left for another person, no matter who that other may be? Tito threw a little leather bag to Gina, apparently full of gold, and he gave a package of letters to Francesca, who, with a sign of farewell to the young man, began at once to read them.

"Row back to Gersau," she said to the boatmen, adding, as if to herself, "I will not let my poor Emilio suffer five minutes longer than he need."

"What has happened?" asked Rodolphe, when she had read her last letter.

"La libertà!" she cried, enthusiastically.

"And money!" echoed Gina, who suddenly found her voice.

"Yes," said Francesca; "no more poverty! It is eleven months now that I have had to work, and I was beginning to be tired of it. Decidedly, I am not a literary woman."

"Who is that Tito?" asked Rodolphe.

"The secretary of the financial department of the

poor shop of the Colonnas," replied Francesca; "in other words, the son of our agent. Poor fellow! he could not come either by the Saint-Gothard, or the Mont Cenis, or the Simplon; he came by sea to Marseilles, and has crossed France. So now, in three weeks we shall be in Geneva, living at our ease! Why, Rodolphe," she said, noticing the sadness on the young man's face, "is n't the Lake of Geneva as fine as the Lake of the Four-Cantons?"

"May I not feel a regret for that delightful cottage of the Bergmanns?" said Rodolphe, pointing to the promontory.

"Come and dine with us, to multiply your recollections, *povero mio*," she said. "We'll keep holiday to-day; there's no longer any danger! My mother writes me that in another year, probably, we shall be amnestied. Oh, *la cara patria*!"

The words made Gina weep. "I should have died of another winter here," she said.

"Poor little Sicilian goat!" cried Francesca, passing her hand over Gina's head with a gesture of affection which made Rodolphe wish he might be thus caressed, even without love.

The boat reached the shore. Rodolphe jumped on the sand and held out his hand to Francesca, walked with her to the Bergmanns' gate, and then went home to dress for dinner.

On his return he found the bookseller and his wife sitting on the outer gallery, and could hardly repress an exclamation of surprise at the enormous change which the good news had wrought in the old man. He now beheld a man about sixty, perfectly preserved, a spare Italian, erect, with hair still black though scanty, and showing a white brow, keen eyes, a complete set of teeth, the face of Cæsar, in short, and on his diplomatic lips a smile that was rather sardonic, apparently the false smile under which a man of the world hides his real feelings.

"You see my husband in his natural guise," said Francesca, gravely.

"He is altogether a new acquaintance," replied Rodolphe, disconcerted.

"Altogether," said the bookseller. "I have played comedies in my time, and know how to disguise myself. Ah, I acted in Paris in the days of the empire with Bourrienne, Madame Murat, Madame d'Abrantès, *e tutti quanti*. Everything we take the trouble to learn in our youth, even foolish things, come to some use. If my wife had not had a man's education, in contradiction to Italian ideas, I should have had to be a woodchopper in order to live at all. Povera Francesca! who could have believed that she would one day support me?"

As Rodolphe listened to the worthy bookseller, so

easy, affable, and still vigorous, he felt certain there was some mystification, and he maintained the observing silence of a duped man.

“What is the matter, signor?” asked Francesca, naïvely. “Surely our happiness does not grieve you?”

“Your husband is a young man,” he said in a low voice.

Her laugh was so frank, so communicative that Rodolphe was more than ever taken aback.

“He has only sixty-five years to offer you,” she said; “but I assure you that is — quite reassuring.”

“I do not like to have you jest about a love as sacred as mine, on which you have imposed your own conditions.”

“Hush!” she said, glancing at her husband to see if he heard them. “Never trouble the peace of that dear man, open-hearted as a child, with whom I do as I will. He is,” she added, “under my protection: If you knew with what nobleness of heart he has risked his life and fortune because I am liberal! for he does not share my political opinions. Isn’t that loving, Monsieur le Français? But they are all so in his family. Emilio’s younger brother was betrayed by the woman he loved, for a charming young man. He stabbed himself through the heart, and ten minutes before he did it, he said: ‘I would kill my rival but it would grieve *her* too much.’”

This mixture of nobleness and merriment, of dignity and childlike playfulness, made Francesca at that moment the most fascinating creature in the world. The dinner, and the evening that followed it, were bright with the gayety which the good news warranted, but Rodolphe was saddened.

"Can it be that she is light-minded?" he said to himself, as he returned to the Stopfers' house. "She shared my grief, but I cannot share her joy."

He blamed himself, and justified the young girl.

"No, she has not a trace of hypocrisy in her; she gives way to her impressions," he thought; "and I am expecting her to be like a Parisian woman."

The next day and the following days, in fact for twenty days, Rodolphe passed all his time at the Bergmann's house, observing Francesca without allowing himself to think that he did so. The admiration of some minds does not exist without a certain element of penetration. The Frenchman saw in Francesca's youthful imprudence the candid nature of a woman who was still undisciplined, fighting against her love at some moments, at others yielding herself gladly up to it. The old man treated her as a father would a daughter, and Francesca showed him in return a profound gratitude which kept alive her feelings of instinctive honor. These circumstances and this woman presented an impenetrable enigma to Rodolphe, the study of which bound him to Francesca even more and more.

The last days they were together were filled with secret joys, mingled with sadness, dissensions, even quarrels that were more charming than the hours when Rodolphe and Francesca understood each other. The young man was more and more entranced by the simplicity of a guileless tenderness, consistent with itself in all things, a tenderness which showed itself — already! — in jealousy of mere nothings.

“You love luxury!” he said to her one evening when she was expressing her desire to leave Gersau where she was deprived of so much.

“I!” she exclaimed. “I love luxury as I love the arts, as I love a picture by Raffaele, a fine horse, a beautiful day, or the bay of Naples — Emilio,” she added, “have I ever complained of our poverty?”

“You would not have been yourself if you had done so,” he answered gravely.

“After all,” she said, with a mischievous glance at her husband and Rodolphe, “is n’t it very natural that the middle classes should like grandeur? My feet,” she added, stretching out two charming little feet, “were not made to be tired. My hands” — and she held one out to Rodolphe — “do you think they were made to work? Leave us now,” she said to her husband. “I have something I want to say to him before we part.”

The old man went back into the salon with charming amiability; he had perfect confidence in his wife.

"I do not wish," she said to Rodolphe, "that you should accompany us to Geneva. Geneva is a gossiping place. Though I am above the foolish nonsense of society, I do not intend to be talked about — not for myself, but for *him*. It is my pride to be his glory; he has been, after all, my sole protector. We leave to-morrow, and you must stay here several days longer. When you come to Geneva, call first on my husband, and let him present you to me. Let us hide our deep and unalterable affection from the eyes of the world. I love you, and you know it. I will prove it to you thus: never shall you find in my conduct anything, no matter what, which can excite your jealousy."

She drew him to a corner of the gallery, took his head between her hands, kissed him on the forehead and went away, leaving him stupefied.

The next day he heard that they had left at day-break. Life at Gersau then became intolerable and he went to Vevey by the longest route, starting earlier than he ought to have done, so eager was he to be on the waters of the lake by which Francesca was awaiting him. He reached Geneva in the last week of October. Wishing to avoid the town itself, he took lodgings in a house at the Eaux-Vives, outside the ramparts. No sooner was he installed than he asked his landlord, an old jeweller, if some Italian refugees from Milan had lately settled in Geneva.

“Not that I know of,” said the landlord. “The Prince and Princess Colonna from Rome have hired for three years the country-house of Monsieur Jeanrenaud, one of the most beautiful places on the lake. It stands between the villa Diodati and the country-house of Monsieur Lafin-de-Dieu, which the Vicomtesse de Beausséant has hired. Prince Colonna came there to meet his daughter and his son-in-law, Prince Gandolphini, a Neapolitan or, if you prefer it, a Sicilian, a former partisan of Murat and a victim of the last revolution. They are the last comers to Geneva, and they are not Milanese. I am told there were many negotiations, and it required all the influence of the Pope in behalf of the family of the Colonnas before a permit could be obtained from the King of Naples and the other powers enabling Prince and Princess Gandolphini to reside here. Geneva is always anxious not to displease the Holy-Alliance, to which she owes her independence. *Our* wisest plan is to cast no censure on the doings of foreign courts. There are many foreigners here, Russian and English.”

“And a few Genevese?”

“Yes, monsieur. Our lake is so fine! Lord Byron lived seven years at the Villa Diodati, which all the world now goes to see, as it does Coppet and Ferney.”

“Could you find out for me whether a bookseller and his wife from Milan, named Lamporani, have come

here during the last week ; he was one of the leaders of the last revolution."

"I can ask at the Strangers' Club," said the landlord.

The first walk Rodolphe took was naturally to the Villa Diodati, the residence of Lord Byron, to which the recent death of the great poet lent a renewed charm — for is not death the chrism of genius? The road from Eaux-Vives skirts the lake, and is, like all the Swiss roads, rather narrow ; in certain places it becomes, by the lay of the rising land, so contracted that two carriages can scarcely pass each other. A short distance before he came to the Jeanrenaud place, which he was approaching without being aware of it, Rodolphe heard the roll of a carriage behind him, and finding himself in a sort of gorge he sprang upon a ledge of rock to let the carriage pass. Naturally, he looked at it, — an elegant calèche drawn by two fine English horses. A sort of vertigo came over him as he saw Francesca, delightfully dressed, sitting in the carriage beside an old lady who was stiff as a cameo. A chasseur, glittering with gold lace, was behind the carriage. Francesca recognized Rodolphe, and smiled to see him standing like a statue on a pedestal. The carriage, which he followed with his eyes as it went up the hill, turned in at the gate of a country-seat, whither he hastened to follow it.

“ Who lives here ? ” he said to a gardener.

“ The Prince and Princess Colonna, also the Prince and Princess Gandolphini.”

“ Did they just drive in ? ”

“ Yes, monsieur.”

The veil fell from Rodolphe’s eyes ; he saw clearly into the past.

“ If I could only be sure,” he said, “ that this is her last deception.”

He dreaded lest he had been the plaything of a mere caprice ; for he had heard others tell of what the *capriccio* of an Italian woman meant. But what a crime he had committed in the eyes of such a woman by taking her for a shopkeeper, a princess born a princess ! by supposing for a moment that the daughter of one of the most illustrious houses of the middle ages was the wife of a bookseller ! The thought of his blunder made Rodolphe all the more anxious to find out at once if he should be ignored and repulsed. He asked for Prince Gandolphini and sent in his card, and was immediately received by the pretended Lamporani, who came to meet him, greeted him with the perfect grace and affability of a Neapolitan, and took him out upon a terrace from which could be seen the whole panorama of Geneva, the Jura and its slopes covered with country-houses, and a broad stretch of the lake.

“ My wife, you see, is faithful to lakes,” he said,

after explaining the landscape to his guest. "We have a sort of concert this evening," he added, as they returned to the house. "I hope you can give the princess and myself the pleasure of seeing you there. Two months of companionship in poverty is equal to years of friendship."

Though devoured with curiosity Rodolphe did not dare ask to see the princess. He walked slowly back to the Eaux-Vives, thinking of the evening. In a few hours his love, immense as it was already, was enhanced by his anxiety and the expectation of events. He began to perceive the necessity of making himself a distinguished career before he could be, socially speaking, on a level with his idol. To his eyes Francesca now seemed lofty through the very simplicity and freedom of her conduct in Geneva. The stiff and haughty air of the Princess Colonna made him tremble with the fear that he should find enemies in the father and mother; at least he had every reason to think so, and the caution which Francesca had urged upon him now appeared only another proof of her tenderness. Was it not saying that she loved him, to be so anxious not to compromise the future?

At last nine o'clock struck. Rodolphe got into a carriage, and said, with an inward emotion that can readily be conceived, "To the Jeanrenaud place—Prince Gandolphini's."

He entered the salon, filled with strangers of the highest distinction, and was forced to stand with others in a group near the door, for a duo by Rossini was then being sung.

At last he saw Francesca, but without being seen by her. The princess was standing near the piano. Her beautiful hair, so long and abundant, was confined by a circlet of gold. Her face, lighted by the wax candles, was dazzling with the whiteness peculiar to Italian women, which presents its full effect only at night. She was in ball dress, which showed the fascinating shoulders, the girlish waist, the arms like those of an antique statue. Her glorious beauty was unrivalled, although there were charming English and Russian women present, also the prettiest women of Geneva and other Italians, among whom shone the illustrious Principessa di Varese and the famous singer Tinti, who was singing at the moment.

Rodolphe, leaning against the door-frame, looked at the princess with that fixed, persistent, magnetic gaze, charged with all the force of human will concentrated in the feeling called desire, which now took the form of violent command. Did the flame of that look touch Francesca? Or was she expecting every instant to see Rodolphe enter? At the end of a few moments her eyes turned to the door, as if drawn there by that current of love, and then, without hesitation, they plunged

into those of Rodolphe. A slight quiver stirred that magnificent face and beautiful body — the emotion of the soul reacted upon them. Francesca blushed. This exchange of looks, so rapid that it was only comparable to lightning, was like a lifetime to Rodolphe; but such happiness can be compared to nothing, — he was loved! The glorious princess had kept, there in the midst of her world, in the beautiful mansion she was inhabiting, the promise given by the poor exile, by the capricious girl of the lake cottage. The intoxication of such a moment makes a man a slave for life. A smile, gracious and significant, candid and triumphant, hovered on the lips of the princess, who, seeing that no one observed her, looked steadily at Rodolphe as if to beg his pardon for deceiving him as to her position.

The piece ended, Rodolphe was able to reach the prince, who at once took him up to his wife. The young man went through the ceremony of official presentation to the Prince and Princess Colonna and to Francesca. When it was over the latter was called upon to sing her part in the famous quartette *Mi manca la voce* which was taken by her, La Tinti, Genovese the celebrated tenor, and a well-known Italian prince, then in exile, whose voice, if he had not been a prince in his own right, would have made him one of the princes of art.

“Sit there,” said Francesca to Rodolphe, giving him

her own chair. "Ah!" she added, with a long aspiration, "I think there must be a mistake in my name; I seem to be a Princess Rodolphini!"

The words were said with a light-heartedness and charm which reminded him of the happy gayety at Gersau. He now enjoyed the delightful sensation of listening to the voice of an adored woman, sitting close beside her so that the stuff of her dress and the gauze of her scarf almost touched his cheek; and when at such a moment the song is *Mi manca la voce*, sung by four of the finest voices in Italy, it is easy to understand why the tears moistened Rodolphe's eyes.

In love, as in all things else perhaps, there are certain facts, trivial in themselves, but the result of a thousand little antecedent circumstances, the bearing of which becomes immense when the past is summed up and connected with the present. We may have felt a thousand times all the worth of the one we love, but a sudden occurrence, the perfect unison of two souls, brought about by a walk together, by a word, by some unexpected *proof* of love, lifts the sentiment to its highest reach. To represent this moral fact by an image which from the earliest ages of the world has been incontestably admitted, in every long chain there are points of attachment where the cohesion is closer than in the circuit of the links. This recognition between Rodolphe and Francesca, during this concert,

in presence of all the world, was one of those powerful couplings which fasten the present to the past and bind forever to the heart a true attachment. Perhaps it was to such bonds as these that Bossuet referred when he spoke of the rare moments of human happiness, — he who loved so keenly and so secretly.

Next to the pleasure of admiring the woman we love, is that of seeing her admired by others. Rodolphe enjoyed them both. Love is the treasure-house of memory ; and though that of Rodolphe was already amply filled, he kept on adding precious pearls, — smiles aside to him alone, stolen glances, inflections of her voice which Francesca found for him alone, making La Tinti pale with jealousy at the applause which followed them. Thus all the strength and power of desire — the will of his wishes — that special form of his soul, turned to the beautiful Roman woman, who became thenceforth and unalterably the source and the purpose of all his thoughts and actions. Rodolphe loved as every woman dreams of being loved, — with a force, a constancy, a tenacity which made Francesca the very fibre and substance of his heart ; he felt her like a purer blood mingling with his blood, a more perfect soul entering his soul ; he knew that thenceforth she would be forever beneath even his slightest efforts, as the golden sands of the Mediterranean lie beneath its waters. Every aspiration of his mind now possessed an active hope.

After some days had passed Francesca recognized the immensity of his love; but it was so natural, and so fully shared by her that she was not surprised by it — she was worthy of it.

“What is there so surprising,” she said to Rodolphe one day, as they walked together along the garden terrace, after she had just detected in him one of those touches of self-conceit so natural to Frenchmen when they express their feelings, “in loving a young and handsome woman who is artist enough to make her living like La Tinti, and who can give a man some of the enjoyments of vanity? Where is the dullard who would n’t be an Amadis under such circumstances? But this is not the point between you and me — *that* is to love with constancy, persistency, at a distance and though years of absence, with no other pleasure than to know ourselves beloved.”

“Alas!” said Rodolphe, “will you not think my fidelity devoid of all reality when you see me absorbed in the pursuits of inordinate ambition? Do you think that I would suffer you some day to exchange the noble name of Princess Gandolphini for that of a man who is obscure? I must become one of the great men of my country; I must be rich, distinguished, so that you may be proud of my name, as you are of your own Colonna!”

“I should be sorry if you did not have such feelings

in your heart," she said with a charming smile. "But do not wear yourself out in the struggle of ambition; keep young. They say that politics make men prematurely old."

The rarest thing in woman is a certain gayety which does not lessen tenderness. This mixture of deep feeling and the light-heartedness of youth added infinite attraction to all the rest of Francesca's charm. In it lies the key-note of her character; she laughed and was tender; she could rise to heights and return to merriment with an ease, a simplicity, which made her the delightful and winsome creature whose charm is known beyond the confines of her own Italy. Behind these womanly graces she concealed a thorough education, due to the semi-monastic and extremely monotonous life she led in the old castle of the Colonnas. In her childhood she was destined for the cloister, being the fourth child of the Prince and Princess Colonna; but the death of two brothers and a sister drew her suddenly from retirement to become one of the greatest heiresses in the Roman States. Her elder sister had been betrothed to Prince Gandolphini, one of the largest landowners in Sicily. Francesca was given to him that no disarrangement might take place in the family affairs. The Colonnas and the Gandolphinis had long intermarried.

From the time she was nine years old until she was

sixteen, Francesca, under the instructions of a monsignore belonging to the family, had read the library of the Colonnas, to employ and train her ardent imagination in the study of science, art, and letters. But she acquired from these studies a taste for independence and liberal ideas which cast her, and her husband with her, into the Revolution. Rodolphe at this time had no idea that Francesca knew Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. The charming creature well understood that the first condition of a woman's education is that it shall be concealed.

Rodolphe remained the whole winter in Geneva. It passed like a day. When the spring came, and in spite of the exquisite enjoyment the companionship of a woman of mind, thoroughly informed, young, gay, and beautiful, gave him, he was conscious of cruel sufferings, borne courageously, though at times they showed in his face, in his bearing, in his words, — perhaps because he thought they were not shared. Sometimes he was irritated while admiring Francesca's calmness; for she appeared, like Englishwomen, to take a pride in showing nothing on her face, the serenity of which seemed to deny her love. Rodolphe would rather have seen her agitated; sometimes he accused her of want of feeling, in refutation of the common belief that Italian women are made up of feverish emotion.

“I am a Roman woman,” she replied gravely one

day when she took up seriously the half-jesting remarks that Rodolphe made to her on this point.

There seemed a depth of meaning in the tone of this reply which gave it the effect of savage irony, and it made Rodolphe quiver. The month of May was displaying the treasures of its young verdure, the sun had moments of strength as though it were mid-summer. Francesca and Rodolphe were leaning on the stone balustrade which, at an angle of the terrace where it projects above the lake, tops the wall of a flight of steps at which the boats are taken. From the neighboring villa, where the place of embarkation is somewhat similar, a wherry darted forth like a swan, with its flag run up and a crimson awning spread, beneath which a charming woman reclined on crimson cushions, her hair wreathed with natural flowers, while a young man, dressed as a sailor, rowed the boat, with all the more grace because he was doing it under her eyes.

“They are happy!” said Rodolphe, in a bitter tone. “Claire de Bourgogne, the last of the only house that was ever able to rival the kings of France —”

“Oh! she comes of an illegitimate branch, illegitimate, moreover, through its women.”

“At any rate, she is the Vicomtesse de Beauséant, and has not —”

“Hesitated — that is what you mean? — to bury

herself here with Monsieur Gaston de Nueil," said the daughter of the Colonnas. "She is only a French-woman; I am an Italian, my dear friend."

Francesca left the balustrade, leaving Rodolphe still there, and went to the farther end of the terrace, from which an extensive view of the lake is obtained. Observing that she walked slowly, the suspicion entered Rodolphe's mind that he had wounded that spirit, so candid, so wise, so proud, and so humble. He turned cold, and followed Francesca, who made him a sign that she wished to be alone; but he paid no attention to the warning, for he saw her tears. Tears from a nature so strong as hers!

"Francesca," he said, taking her hand, "is there a single regret in your heart?"

She was silent, but withdrew her hand and took her handkerchief to wipe her eyes.

"Forgive me," he said, as with a sudden impulse he darted forwards to dry those eyes with a kiss.

Francesca did not notice the passionate movement, so deeply was she moved. Rodolphe, thinking she consented, grew bolder; he caught her by the waist, strained her to his heart, and kissed her; but she freed herself with a magnificent action of offended modesty. Standing back two steps, and looking at him without anger but resolutely, she said: "You will leave to-night. We shall not see each other again till we meet in Naples."

In spite of the severity of this order it was carried out, for Francesca willed it.

On his return to Paris Rodolphe found at his house a portrait of the Princess Gandolphini, painted by Schinner as Schinner alone knows how to paint a portrait. This artist had passed through Geneva on his way to Italy. As he had positively refused to paint a number of women, Rodolphe did not think that the prince, who was extremely anxious for a portrait of his wife, had vanquished the painter's reluctance. But Francesca, no doubt, captivated him, and obtained — what was really a prodigy of success — an original portrait for Rodolphe and a copy for Emilio. This was told to Rodolphe in a charming and delightful letter, in which the thoughts made up for the stiffness imposed by the religion of conventions. He answered it; and thus began, never to end, a correspondence between Rodolphe and Francesca which was the only pleasure they allowed themselves.

Rodolphe, in the grasp of an ambition sanctified by love, went to work. He wanted, in the first place, money; and he embarked on an enterprise into which he flung every power he possessed and all his capital. But he had to struggle, with the inexperience of youth, against a duplicity which, in the end, triumphed over him. Three years were lost in that great enterprise — three years of efforts and of courage.

The ministry of Villèle fell at the time of Rodolphe's

disaster. The dauntless lover then thought to obtain from public life what industrial enterprise denied him. But before casting himself into the tempests of that career he went — all bleeding and suffering, to heal his wounds and gain fresh courage — to Naples, where the Prince and Princess Gandolphini were now recalled and reinstated in their position by order of the King. In the midst of his struggle this was a time of refreshment, full of sweetness. He passed three months at the Villa Gandolphini, cradled in hope.

On his return to Paris Rodolphe began once more the edifice of his fortunes. Already his talents had made him known; he was about to realize the hopes of his ambition; a position of eminence was promised to him in return for his devotion and for services rendered to the government. At that moment the revolution of July, 1830, broke forth, and again his bark foundered.

SHE and GOD — they are the only witnesses of the bravest efforts, the boldest enterprises that a young man ever undertook, — a young man gifted with powers, but who, up to this time, has lacked the help of the god of fools, happiness! Yet this indefatigable athlete, sustained by Love, begins the conflict anew, inspired by a glance that is ever loving, by a heart that is ever true. All ye who love, pray for him!

III.

WHEN Mademoiselle de Watteville finished reading this tale, her cheeks were on fire, fever was in her veins, and she wept — for rage. This novel, written in the style of the literature then in fashion, was the first of its kind which Rosalie had ever devoured. Love was described there, if not by the hand of a master, certainly by a man who seemed to be relating his own impressions of it. Now truth, however ill-presented, will always touch the virgin soul; and here lies the secret of Rosalie's agitation, her fever, her tears, — she was jealous of Francesca Colonna. The girl had no doubt whatever of the sincerity of this poem; she felt certain that Albert had found a personal pleasure in relating the outset of his passion, concealing no doubt the names, perhaps the localities. Rosalie was seized with an infernal curiosity. What woman would not have desired as she did to know the real name of her rival? For — she loved. Reading these pages, which were like a contagion to her, she said to herself the solemn words: "I love." She loved Albert; she felt

in her heart a burning desire to struggle for him, to tear him from this unknown rival. The thought came to her that she knew nothing of music and was not handsome.

“He will never love me,” she said to herself.

That thought redoubled her desire to know if she was right, if Albert really loved an Italian princess, and if he were loved by her. During this fatal night the spirit of prompt decision which distinguished the famous Watteville displayed itself, to its fullest extent, in his descendant. She conceived those extravagant schemes round which the imaginations of young girls often revolve when, in the solitude to which some imprudent mothers condemn them, they are excited by an unexpected or stirring event which the system of repression to which they are subjected has neither foreseen nor prevented. She thought of descending by a ladder from the kiosk into Albert’s garden, and taking advantage of his being asleep to look through his window and see the interior of his study. She thought of writing to him, of breaking the bonds of Besancian social life by introducing him into the salon of the hôtel de Rupt. This latter enterprise, which would have seemed the height of impossibility to the Abbé de Grancey himself, was clinched by a thought.

“Yes!” she said to herself, “there are claims against my father for part of his Rouxey property; I’ll go

there ! If there is no lawsuit, I'll bring one about, and then *he* will come to our house," she cried, springing from her bed to the window that she might see the bewitching light which illuminated *his* working hours. One o'clock struck ; he was still asleep.

" I shall see him when he wakes ; perhaps he will come to the window," she thought.

Just at that moment Mademoiselle de Watteville was witness of a little scene which placed in her hands the means of knowing Albert's secrets. By the light of the moon she saw two arms stretched from the kiosk, which were helping Jérôme, Albert's servant, to climb to the top of the wall and enter the arbor. In Jérôme's accomplice Rosalie at once recognized Mariette.

" Mariette and Jérôme !" she said to herself, " Mariette ! such an ugly creature ! they ought to be ashamed of themselves."

* Though Mariette was in fact horribly ugly and thirty-six years old, she had inherited certain lots of land. For seventeen years she had been in the employ of Madame de Watteville, who valued her devotion, her honesty, and her long service ; during this time she had economized and had no doubt invested her wages and her savings. Now, the laying by of ten louis a year, meant the possession, counting compound interest and her inherited land, of something like ten thousand francs. To Jérôme's eyes ten thousand francs changed

the laws of optics ; he thought Mariette's figure pretty, and he failed to see the pits and seams that small-pox had left on her flat and skinny face ; in his eyes the crooked mouth was straight, and ever since his service to the lawyer had brought him into the neighborhood of the hôtel de Rupt he had laid siege in form to the pious waiting-maid, who was quite as stiff and prudish as her mistress, and, like all ugly old maids, much more exacting than a pretty woman.

If the nocturnal scene in the kiosk is now explained to clear-sighted persons, it was far from being plain to Rosalie, who nevertheless obtained from it the most dangerous of all instructions, that of bad example. A mother brings up a daughter rigidly for seventeen years, and in one hour a servant-woman destroys that long and patient labor, sometimes by a word, often by a gesture. Rosalie went to bed again, not without thinking of the benefit she might obtain from her discovery.

The next morning, on her way to mass accompanied by Mariette (for Madame de Watteville was ill and unable to go out), Rosalie took her maid's arm, which greatly surprised the peasant-woman.

"Mariette," she said, "is Jérôme in his master's confidence?"

"I don't know, mademoiselle."

"Don't play the innocent with me," said Mademoiselle de Watteville dryly. "You let him kiss you

last night in the kiosk. I am no longer surprised that you took such interest in the improvements my mother has made in the garden."

Rosalie felt how Mariette trembled by the shaking of her arm.

"I don't wish you any harm," continued Rosalie. "You need n't be uneasy ; I shall not say a word to my mother, and you can see Jérôme as much as you please."

"But, mademoiselle," said Mariette, "it is all proper. Jérôme means to marry me ; he has no other thought."

"Then why do you let him come at night?"

Mariette, disconcerted, had no reply to make.

"Now listen, Mariette. I, too, love some one — in secret ; no one knows it. After all, I am my father and mother's only child ; therefore remember that you have more to expect from me than from any one else in the world."

"Certainly, mademoiselle, and you may count on me for life and death," cried Mariette, delighted at this unexpected turn of events.

"In the first place, silence for silence," went on Rosalie. "I don't wish to marry Monsieur de Soulas, but I do wish a certain thing. My good-will to you depends on it."

"What is it?" asked Mariette.

"I want to see the letters which Monsieur Savaron gives Jérôme to put in the post."

“What will you do with them?” asked Mariette, frightened.

“Oh, merely read them — you shall put them in the post yourself afterwards. It will only cause a little delay, that’s all.”

At that moment Mademoiselle de Watteville and Mariette entered the church, and each was occupied by her own reflections instead of attending to the Ordinary of the Mass.

“Good heavens! how many sins there are in it?” thought Mariette.

Rosalie, whose soul, head, and heart were completely upset by the reading of that novel, felt more and more certain it was a history written for the eyes of her rival. By dint of reflecting, as children do, perpetually on one thing, she ended by supposing that the “*Revue de l’Est*” must certainly be sent to the woman Albert loved.

“Oh!” she said to herself on her knees, her head in her hands in the attitude of a person absorbed in prayer, “oh, how can I get my father to examine the list of subscribers to whom they send the review?”

After breakfast she walked round the garden with her father, petting him, and finally led him into the kiosk.

“Don’t you suppose, my dear little papa,” she said, “that our *Revue* is sent to foreign countries?”

“Why it is only just beginning —”

“I am sure it is sent to foreigners.”

“Not likely.”

“Go and find out, and take the names of the foreign subscribers.”

Two hours later Monsieur de Watteville said to his daughter: “I was right; there is not a single subscriber in foreign countries. They expect some from Berne, Neufchâtel, and Geneva. There is one copy sent to Italy, but that is done gratuitously, to a Milanese lady at her country-place at Belgirate on the Lago Maggiore.”

“What’s her name?” said Rosalie quickly.

“The Duchesse d’Argaiolo.”

“Do you know her, papa?”

“I have heard of her. She was born Princess Soderini. She is a Florentine, a very great lady and as rich as her husband, who has one of the largest fortunes in all Lombardy. Their villa on the Lago Maggiore is one of the sights of Italy.”

Two days later Mariette brought the following letter to Mademoiselle de Watteville: —

“TO MONSIEUR LÉOPOLD HANNEQUIN.

“BESANÇON, November, 1834.

“You see, my dear friend, that I am at Besançon while you thought me travelling. I wished to tell you

nothing of my plans until success came to them — the dawn has come, at last! Yes, dear Léopold, after the failure of so many enterprises in which I spent my best heart's blood, my every effort, and used such courage, I have now resolved to do as you did, — take the beaten track, the high-road, the longest, the surest. I see you jump in your office-chair! But do not think there is any change in my inner life, in the secret hopes which are known to you alone, — and even so with the reserves which She exacted.

“The upshot of the first enterprise in which I put all my hopes, and which failed through the treachery of my partners who made common cause to rob me, — me, to whose activity they owed all, — made me renounce all schemes for pecuniary success, after losing three years of my life, one of which was consumed in law-suits. Perhaps I might have been worse off than I was if I had not been compelled to study law when I was twenty. I next resolved to enter political life, hoping to rise by degrees until I should some day be included among the elevations to the peerage under the title of Comte Albert Savaron de Savarus, and thus revive in France a noble name extinct in Belgium, although I am, as you know, neither legitimate nor legitimatized.”

“Ah! I was sure of it,” cried Rosalie, letting fall the letter, “he is noble!”

“ You know what conscientious pains I took as a devoted, obscure, but useful journalist, and how faithfully I discharged the duties of secretary to that statesman who, up to 1829, was faithful to me. The revolution of 1830 threw me back to nothingness ; and then, just as my name was beginning to shine, — at the very moment when as Master of petitions I was about to become a necessary part of the political engine, — I committed the blunder of remaining faithful to the vanquished side and fighting for their cause, with no help from them. Ah ! why was I only thirty-three years old, and why did I not apply to you to make me eligible ?

“ I hid all my perils and my devoted efforts from you, and why ? — because I had faith, and you would not have agreed with me. Ten months ago, when you saw me so gay, apparently so contented, writing my political articles, despair was in my heart. I was then thirty-seven years old, without a name, possessing two thousand francs for my whole fortune, and having just failed in a noble enterprise, a daily paper that spoke for the needs of the future and not to the passions of the moment. I knew not where to look, nor what course to take. I was beside myself. I wandered, gloomy and bleeding, through the solitary places of that Paris which had escaped me, thinking of my foiled ambitions, but never yielding them. Oh ! what

letters of rage and madness have I not written to Her, my second conscience, my other self! Sometimes I thought: 'Why make so vast a scheme for life? why desire all things? why not await happiness, employing my days in some half-mechanical occupation?'

"Thus thinking, I looked about me for some modest position by which I could live. I was just about to accept the place of manager of a newspaper under an editor who knew but little, a man ambitious only for money, when a species of terror seized me.

" 'Would She accept as a husband a lover who had fallen so low?' I said to myself.

"This thought made me once more twenty-two years old. Oh! my dear Léopold, how the soul wears out under such perplexities. What the eagles must suffer in a cage! and the lions! They suffer as Napoleon suffered, not at St. Helena, but on the quai of the Tuileries, August the tenth, when he saw Louis XVI. defending himself so foolishly, — he who could have quelled the sedition, as he did later on the same spot in Vendémiaire. Well, my life has had the equal of that one day's suffering spread over every day for four long years. How many speeches before the Chamber have I not uttered aloud as I walked the lonely paths of the Bois de Boulogne! That wasted eloquence did at least unlimber my tongue and accustom my mind to formulate its thought in words. While I was thus

being tortured you were married, you paid off the cost of your practice, became assistant-mayor of your arrondissement, and won the cross of the Legion of honor for your wound at Saint-Merri.

“When I was a child and teased cockchafers, the poor insects used to make motions which sent me almost into a fever, — I mean their efforts to fly without being able to rise, although they spread their wings. The boys used to say, ‘They are counting.’ Was it sympathy for the poor insects? was it a vision of my future? Oh! to spread my wings and not have the power to fly! that is my fate ever since the failure of that fine enterprise in which others discouraged me, but which has since made the fortune of four families.

“At last, seven months ago, I resolved to make myself a name at the Paris bar, seeing how many empty places were left by the political advancement of lawyers to eminent places under government. But, recollecting the rivalries I had met with in journalism, and how difficult it is to make one’s self first known in any way in Paris, that arena so filled with distinguished champions, I came to a resolution, very hard on myself but certain in its effects, and possibly more rapid in results than any other. You had often told me, in our talks together, of the social condition of Besançon, the impossibility of a stranger entering its social circles, making a sensation, marrying, or succeeding in any way whatever.

It was there that I determined to plant my flag-staff, thinking that I should find no rivals at any rate, and be all alone in seeking my return as deputy. The Besancians did not wish to know strangers, — well, then, they should never know me; society denied them admittance to its salons, — I would never seek it. I would go nowhere, not even into the streets. But there is a class which, as you know, makes the deputies to the Chamber; I mean the commercial class; I would make a special study of commercial questions (about which I knew much already); I would win cases, heal differences, and become the most powerful lawyer before the courts of commerce at Besançon. Later, I would found a Review, in which the interests of the place would be forwarded, or I would awaken a sense of them, and make them living and active questions. When I had thus won silently a sufficient number of suffrages I would give my name for election. They might disdain, even for a length of time, an unknown lawyer, but something would happen to bring me forward, some gratuitous cause, some case which none of the other lawyers cared to defend. I knew that if I once spoke I was sure of success.

“ Well, my dear Léopold, I packed my library in eleven cases. I bought law-books, and I sent the whole, together with my furniture, by carrier to Besançon. I took out my diplomas, collected three thousand

francs in money, and bade you good-by. The mail-coach brought me to Besançon, where, in less than three days, I chose a small lodging which looks out on gardens. Here I have sumptuously arranged a private study, where I spend my days and nights. Here the portrait of my idol shines, — She, to whom my life is vowed ; who fills it, who is the impulse of my efforts, the secret of my courage, the origin of my talents. When my furniture and books arrived I engaged an intelligent servant, and here I have lived for the last five months like a marmot in winter.

“I ought to say that my name had been duly inscribed on the register of lawyers. At last, I was one day appointed by the judge to defend a miserable prisoner at the assizes. No doubt they wanted to hear what I could do. One of the most influential men of business in Besançon happened to be on the jury, and he had, at the time, a difficult case of his own on hand. I did all that it was possible to do for my client, and met with complete success. The man was declared innocent, and I was able to bring about, most dramatically, the arrest of the real culprits, who were among the witnesses for the prosecution. The court itself shared the admiration of the public. I saved the pride of the prosecuting officer by pointing out the almost impossibility of discovering a plot so carefully laid. The result of this case was that I won the patronage of

the rich and influential merchant, and I also won his case. Soon after that the Chapter of the cathedral selected me as their lawyer in a suit against the town which had lasted four years. This I also won. So, by three suits, I became the most important lawyer in the Franche-Comté.

“But, all the same, I bury my own life in solitude, and thus I conceal my ambitions. I have contracted habits which excuse me from accepting all invitations. I can only be consulted from six to eight o’clock in the morning. I go to bed after dinner, and work during the night. The vicar-general, an able man and very influential, who was the one to entrust me with the Chapter’s case (then nearly lost) naturally spoke of recompense. ‘Monsieur,’ I said, ‘I will win your case, but I do not wish a fee — I wish something more than that’ (here the abbé started). ‘I must tell you that I shall lose a great deal by taking your case and by making myself the adversary of the town. I came here desiring to be made deputy; I wish to take none but commercial cases, because it is the business men who elect the deputies, and they will distrust me if I plead for *priests* — for priests you are in their eyes. If I consent to take your case it is because I was in 1828 the private secretary of’ (naming the minister — much surprise on the abbé’s part), ‘and Master of petitions under my own name of Albert de Savarus’ (still

greater surprise). ‘I am faithful to the principles of Monarchy; but, inasmuch as you are not in the majority in Besançon I must obtain the votes of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the fee that I ask is the votes that you can obtain for me when the opportune moment comes. Let us keep this to ourselves, and I will defend gratis the interests of the diocese.’ When he came to thank me after the cause was won he brought a bank-note of five hundred francs and whispered in my ear, ‘You shall have the votes all the same.’ In the five conferences that we had together I feel sure that I made myself a friend in that man.

“At the present time I am overwhelmed with business, and can take only that of the merchants; in fact, I say openly that questions of commerce are my specialty. These tactics have rallied the business men to me, and I am able to pick out the most influential among them. So everything is going well. In a few months I shall find a house in Besançon and buy it, and thus obtain a settlement for election. I count on you to lend me the money for this purchase. If I die, or fail of my purpose, there will not be serious loss. The interest on the money will be met by the rental, and I will take good care that you lose nothing on the mortgage.

“Ah! my dear Léopold, no gambler, with the last of his fortune in his pocket and staking it at the Cercle

des Étrangers on a single throw which is to make him rich or ruined, ever had such ringing in his ears, such nervous sweat on his hands, such inward tremblings of his body as I live through every day while playing this my last stake in the game of ambition. Alas! dear and only friend, the struggle has now lasted ten years. This battle with men and things, in which I have ceaselessly expended my strength and my energy, and strained my will to its utmost tension, has sapped me, so to speak, within. With every appearance of health and strength, I feel I am broken down. Every day carries away with it some shred of my inner life. At each new effort I feel that I can never make another. I have no strength left for anything but happiness, and if it does not come to lay its crown of roses on my head, the *I* that I am can exist no longer — I shall be a thing destroyed; I shall desire nothing more, I can be nothing more in this world. You know well that the power, the fame, the immense moral success I seek is but a secondary thing; for me it is only a means to bliss, the pedestal for my Idol.

“To attain my end and die, like the runners of antiquity! to see success and death together on the threshold of my door! to obtain her I love when love expires! to lose the power to enjoy when I have won the right to happiness — oh! how many men there are who meet this fate!

“Of a surety there comes a moment when Tantalus stops short, crosses his arms, and defies all hell by refusing to endure his pangs eternally. Léopold, I shall have reached that point if my hopes fail me now; if, after grovelling in the dust of this province, after prowling like a famished tiger round these merchants, these electors, to win their votes, if after giving my time, — *my time*, which I would fain have spent on the Lago Maggiore, looking at the water her eyes look at, lying beneath those eyes, hearing that voice, — I should fail to reach the Chamber and win the halo which my name must wear before she takes it.

“But more than that, Léopold; there are days when I feel an indefinable languor: a deadly disgust of all things rises in my soul, more especially if, in revery, my thoughts have dwelt in advance on the joys of happy love. Can it be that our passionate desires have but a certain amount of strength? do they perish through too great an emission of their vitality? But, after all, my life *is* beautiful, — illuminated by faith, by work, by love! Adieu, my friend; I kiss your children and beg you to recall me to the kind remembrance of your excellent wife.

“ALBERT.”

Rosalie read this letter twice, and the general meaning of it entered her mind. She penetrated suddenly into Albert's past life; for her awakened intellect ex-

plained to her many details and made her comprehend their bearing. Connecting the confidences in this letter with the novel published in the review, she was able to understand Albert thoroughly. She magnified, not unnaturally, the proportions, actually great, of his fine soul, and the power of his firm will, and her love became thenceforth a passion, the violence of which was increased by the vigor of her youth, the dulness of her secluded life, and the inherited energy of her character. That a young girl should love is simply the effect of natural law, but when her need of affection fastens upon a remarkable man it mingles with it an enthusiasm ever ready to gush forth in all young hearts. Consequently it was not many days before Mademoiselle de Watteville's feelings reached a phase of morbid and very dangerous excitement. The baroness was at this time quite satisfied with the girl, who, under the sway of her private thoughts, no longer resisted her mother, but on the contrary, seemed absorbed in their various feminine occupations and realized the ideal of a submissive daughter.

The lawyer, meantime, had two or three cases weekly before the courts. Overwhelmed with work, he nevertheless found time to do it all and to follow up the interests of the review. He neglected no means of success; he studied the lists of the Besancian electors, and sought to discover their interests,

their characters, their various likings, their antipathies. A cardinal wishing to be elected pope never took greater trouble. But he kept himself and his life hidden, — convinced that the more secret his influence was, the more real and powerful it would become.

One evening, when Mariette came to dress Rosalie for a party, she gave her (not without groaning in spirit over such abuse of confidence) a sealed letter, the address of which made Mademoiselle de Watteville tremble and turn red and pale alternately. It read: —

TO MADAME LA DUCHESSE D'ARGAIOLO.

(née Princesse Soderini)

à Belgirate,

Lago Maggiore. Italy.

To Rosalie's eyes those words shone with fire, as did the "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" to the eyes of Belshazzar. After hiding the letter she went downstairs to accompany her mother to Madame de Chavoncourt's, and during the whole of that interminable evening she was a prey to scruples and remorse. Already she had endured much shame for having violated her honor and read the letter from Albert to Léopold. She had several times asked herself whether, if the noble Albert knew of her crime, all the more infamous because it

could not be punished, he would respect her. Conscience answered No! vehemently. She had expiated her fault by enduring various penances: she fasted, she stayed on her knees for hours with her arms crossed on her breast, repeating prayers. She compelled Mariette to perform the same acts of repentance; the sincerest asceticism mingled with her passion and made it all the more dangerous.

“ Shall I — or shall I not — read that letter?” she was saying to herself all the while that she was talking with the young de Chavoncours. One of them was sixteen, the other seventeen and a half. Rosalie now considered her two friends as children because they did not love in secret. “ If I do read it,” she said to herself, after floating an hour between yes and no, “ it shall certainly be the last. As I did so much to know what he said to his friend, why not do the same to know what he says to *her*? If it is a dreadful crime is it not also a proof of love? Oh! Albert, am I not in truth your wife?”

When Rosalie was in bed she opened the letter. It was dated from day to day so as to give the duchess a faithful picture of Albert’s life and feelings.

“ 25th.

“ MY DEAR SOUL, — All goes well. To the conquests I have already made, I have just added another, — a precious one. I have rendered some service to

the man in Besançon who is most influential in the matter of elections. Like those critics who make the reputation of others without ever being able to make one for themselves, he elects deputies though he has never been elected himself. The worthy man is anxious to prove his gratitude as cheaply as possible, in fact without drawing his purse-strings; and he said to me to-day, 'Should you like to enter the Chamber? I can easily have you nominated.' To this I replied, hypocritically, 'If I should resolve to enter the political arena it would be to devote myself to the interests of La Comté, which I like, and where I have been appreciated.' 'Very good,' he said, 'we will decide on you, and through you we shall get an influence in the Chamber, for you are certain to distinguish yourself.'

"And so, my dear loved angel, in spite of all you say, my persistency is about to win the crown. Before long, I shall speak from the French tribune to my country, to Europe. My name will be brought to you by the hundred voices of the French press.

"Yes, I came, as you said, old to Besançon, and Besançon has made me older still; but, like Sixtus the Fifth, I shall be young on the morrow of my election. I shall enter my real life, my sphere. Shall we not then be equals? The Comte Savaron de Savarus, ambassador to I know not where, can surely aspire to marry a Princess Soderini. Success rejuvenates men

whom successive struggles have kept alive. Oh, my dear Life! with what joy did I dart just now from my library to my study, to thy dear portrait, that I might tell it of this success before writing it to my angel. Yes, the votes I have won myself, those of the vicar-general, and those of this client make my election a certainty.

“26th.

“We are now in the twelfth year since that happy evening when, by a glance, the beautiful duchess ratified the promises of the exiled Francesca. Ah! dearest, you are now thirty-two, and I am thirty-five; the dear duke is seventy-seven, that is, ten years older than our united ages, and his health is still good. I have as much patience as I have love. In fact, I need a few more years to bring my fortunes to the level of your name. You see, dear, I am gay, I can laugh to-day; and this is the effect of hope. Sadness or gayety, all comes to me from you. The hope of success sends me back to the morrow of the day when I first saw you, when my life joined itself to yours as the earth to the sun. It is now eleven years and more since I came to that villa on the Lake of Constance! Eleven years that I cry to you, that you shine upon my life like a star too high in the heavens for man to reach.

“27th.

“No, dear, do not go to Milan; stay at Belgirate. Milan terrifies me. I cannot endure that Milanese

fashion of gossiping every evening at La Scala with a dozen persons, among whom it is impossible to believe there will not be some to say sweet things to you. To me, solitude is like amber in the bosom of which an insect lives eternally in its immutable beauty. The soul and the body of a woman thus remain in all the purity of their earliest youth. Can it be that you regret those *Tedeschi*?

“ 28th.

“ Will they never finish your bust? I long to have you in marble, in painting, in miniature, in all ways — to cheat my impatience. I am constantly expecting that view of Belgirate to the south, and also that of the gallery. They are the only ones still wanting to my collection. I am so busy that to-day I can tell you nothing but a nothing, but that nothing is ALL. Was it not out of nothing that God made the world? My nothing is a word — the word of God: *I love thee*.

“ 30th.

“ Ah! I have just received your journal. Thanks for your punctuality. So it did give you pleasure to read the story of our first acquaintance thus written down? Alas! much as I veiled it, I feared I should offend you. A review without a novel, you know, is like a lady without hair. Having no faculty for story-making myself, and being in despair, I took the only poetry that is in my soul, the only tale that is in my memory, and I told it in the tone in which alone it

could be told, never ceasing for one moment to think of you as I wrote the sole literary fragment which has ever come from my heart, I cannot say my pen. Did you laugh at the transformation of your surly Sormano into Gina?

“ You ask about my health, — better, much, than in Paris. Though I work incessantly the quiet of everything about me has an influence on my soul. That which fatigues and ages, dear love, are the pains of mortified vanity, the perpetual irritations of Parisian life, the contests of rival ambitions. Tranquillity is a balm. If you knew what pleasure your letter gives me, that good, long letter in which you tell me all the little incidents of your life — No, you women will never know the degree of interest which a true lover takes in such daily trifles. It gives me intense pleasure to look at that specimen of your new gown; how can I help caring to know how you are dressed; whether your beautiful forehead is scratched; whether our French authors please you; whether those poems of Canalis stirred your feelings? I read all that you read. There is not a word in your letter, even to your walk by the lake, that does not touch me; it is all beautiful, sweet, and lovely as your soul. O flower divine and long adored, how could I ever have lived without these precious letters which, for eleven years, have sustained me on my struggling way, like a beacon,

like a perfume, like a measured chant, like a divine nourishment, like all that consoles and gives a charm to life. Let them never fail me. If you knew my anxiety on the days before they are due, and my sufferings if anything delays them? Is she ill? is it *he*? I live between heaven and hell; sometimes I am almost mad. *O mia cara diva*, continue to cultivate your music; exercise your voice; study. I am happy indeed in the similarity of our pursuits; even our hours are the same, so that in fact, though parted by the Alps, we live in precisely the same manner. This thought charms me and gives me courage. When I argued a case for the first time (this I have not yet told you) I fancied that you were listening, and I suddenly felt within me that influx of inspiration which puts the poet above humanity. If I go to the Chamber, oh, you will, you *must* come to Paris and be present at my first session.

“30th, at night.

“Ah! Francesca, how I love you! Alas! I have put too many things into my love, into my hopes. A single mishap would send my ship, too heavily freighted, to the bottom, engulfing my life. It is now three years since I have seen you!—the very idea of going to Belgrate makes my heart beat so violently that I must stop writing. To see you, only to hear that childlike, caressing voice! to embrace, by the eyes alone, that ivory skin, so dazzling with light,

beneath which your noble thoughts are visible! to watch those fingers as they touch the keys, to receive your soul in a look, your heart in the tones of an *Oimé!* or an *Alberto!* to walk beside you among the orange-trees in bloom, to live a few months with you in the bosom of that glorious landscape — ah, that is life! What folly to be rushing after power, name, a fortune! All is at Belgirate: there is poesy, there is fame! Why did I not stay there and be your bailiff, or, as the dear tyrant whom we cannot hate proposed to me, as your *cavaliere servente* — but *that* our ardent passion would not suffer us to accept. Adieu, dear angel; you must forgive my next sadness in remembrance of this gayety — which falls like a ray from that torch of happiness which has hitherto seemed to me too like an *ignis-fatuus*."

"How he loves her!" cried Rosalie, letting fall the letter, which seemed to her too heavy to hold. "To write like that at the end of eleven years!"

"Mariette," said Mademoiselle de Watteville the next morning to her maid, "put that letter in the post and tell Jérôme that I know all I wish to know, and that in future he is to serve Monsieur Albert faithfully. We will confess these sins, but without saying to whom the letters belonged nor to whom they were going. I have done wrong; and I alone am to blame."

“Mademoiselle has been crying,” said Mariette.

“Yes, and I don’t want my mother to notice it. Give me some cold water.”

In the midst of the tumults of her passion Rosalie often listened to the voice of her conscience. Touched by the wonderful fidelity of these two hearts, she had just said her prayers, admitting that she must resign herself, and respect the happiness of two beings worthy of each other, submissive to their fate and awaiting the will of God, without attempting any action or even allowing any wish that was criminal. She felt better in soul, she even obtained a certain inward satisfaction, after taking a resolution which the rectitude of youth dictated to her. Besides, she was encouraged in it by the natural thought of a young girl—was she not sacrificing herself for *him*?

“She does not know how to love,” thought Rosalie. “*I* would sacrifice everything to a man who loved me like that. To be loved!—when and by whom shall I be loved? That young Monsieur de Soulas loves my money; if I were poor he would n’t dream of me.”

“Rosalie, my dear, what are you thinking of? you are going outside the pattern,” said the baroness to her daughter, who was doing a pair of slippers in worsted-work for her father.

IV.

ROSALIE spent the whole winter of 1834-1835 in secret and tumultuous agitation; but in the spring, during the month of April, when she reached her nineteenth birthday, she began to tell herself that it might be well to get the better of a Duchesse d'Argaiolo. In the silence and solitude of her life the prospect of such a struggle revived her passion and all her evil thoughts. She developed a romantic daring in making plan after plan of operations. Though such characters are exceptional, there do exist, unfortunately, too many Rosalies, and this history contains a warning by which they ought to profit.

During this winter Albert Savarus had made immense though silent progress in Besançon. Sure of success, he was now impatiently awaiting the dissolution of the Chamber. He had gained, among the men of the *juste-milieu*, one of the builders of Besançon, a rich contractor, who wielded a great influence.

The Romans, wherever they settled, took immense trouble and spent enormous sums to obtain unlimited

supplies of good water in all the towns of their empire. At Besançon they drank the water from the Arcier, a mountain at some distance from the town. Besançon stands in the middle of a horse-shoe formed by the river Doubs. Therefore, to repair the Roman aqueduct for the purpose of drinking the water the Romans drank in a town surrounded by a river is one of those apparent absurdities which could obtain acceptance only in a province where the most exemplary seriousness reigns. But if this fancy did enter the mind of the Besancians, it would need a great outlay to carry it out, and such outlay would benefit contractors. Albert Savarus had made up his mind that the water of the Doubs was only fit to run under a suspension bridge, and that no water was suitable for drinking purposes except that from the mountain. Articles on this subject appeared in the "Revue de l'Est," which were found to express the ideas of the business community of Besançon. The nobles and bourgeois, the *juste-milieu* and the legitimists, the government and the opposition were all agreed that they would drink their water through the Roman aqueduct and enjoy the benefits of a suspension bridge as well. The question of the Arcier became the leading topic of the day. At Besançon, as in all other places, there were secret interests which sprang into a vigorous vitality at the prospect. Cautious persons who opposed these schemes

(there were but few of them, it is true) were regarded as blockheads. The whole town busied itself with the two projects of Albert Savarus.

After eighteen months of subterraneous work, that ambitious man had actually succeeded, in the most stagnant town in France and the most refractory under foreign influence, in stirring public opinion deeply, and in pulling, as the saying is, the wires of a positive influence without once leaving his own home. He had solved the singular problem of becoming powerful without the slightest popularity.

During this winter he won seven cases for the clergy of Besançon, and at times he drew long breaths of relief at the thought of his assured triumph. The immense desire which led him to draw so many interests into his field of action, and to invent so many resources, absorbed all the powers of his soul, already strained too heavily. People praised his disinterested conduct; he accepted without remark the fees that his clients offered him. But such disinterestedness was really a form of moral usury; he expected a payment greater in his eyes than all the gold in the kingdom. He had bought, in October, 1834, the house of a merchant whose affairs were involved, and he had paid for it with money advanced by Léopold Hannequin. The ownership of this property made him eligible for election.

“You are certainly a very remarkable man,” the

Abbé de Grancey said to him, having closely observed and fathomed much of his character. The vicar-general had brought with him an ecclesiastic who wanted legal advice. "You are a priest who has missed his vocation."

The remark struck Savarus forcibly.

By this time Rosalie had decided, with the strong will of a fragile young girl, to bring Monsieur Savarus into her mother's salon and present him to the society of the hôtel de Rupt. Her desires were limited, so far, to the pleasure of seeing Albert and listening to him. She had compromised with her conscience, so to speak, and such compromises are usually mere truces.

Les Rouxey, the patrimonial estate of the Watteilles, produced the sum of ten thousand francs a year, net; but in other hands it would have brought in more. The careless indifference of the baron, whose wife had an income of forty thousand, left Les Rouxey to the management of a sort of Maître Jacques, an old family servant named Modinier. Still, whenever the baron and baroness wished to stay in the country they usually went to Les Rouxey, which is very picturesquely situated. The house, the park, in fact the whole place was created by the famous Watteville, who, in his active old age, was passionately fond of this beautiful spot.

Between two little alps, and two peaks, the summits of which are bare and are called, respectively, the Great and the Little Rouxey, and across the gorge where the water of these mountains and that of the Dent de Vilard flow to meet the delightful sources of the Doubs, the great Watteville took it into his head to build an enormous dam, leaving two outlets to take the overflow. He thus obtained a charming lake, and, at the outlets, two cascades, which, uniting at some little distance below their fall, formed a stream that watered the dry and uncultivated valley, which had hitherto been only devastated by the rushing torrents from the hills. He enclosed this lake, valley, and the two hills, and built a small country-house or hermitage near the dam, bringing to the spot all the soil which it was necessary to remove to make the bed of the river below the falls, and also that of the various streamlets for irrigation.

When the Baron de Watteville made this lake he owned the two Rouxey mountains, but not the upper valley which he thus flooded, and through which the country people had always had a right of way to the Dent de Vilard, which closes this horseshoe valley at its upper end. But the savage old man inspired such terror that during his lifetime no remonstrance was made by the inhabitants of Riceys, a little village lying on the slopes of the Dent de Vilard. Before

the baron died he had built a wall from one Rouxey mountain to the other, at the foot of the Dent de Vilard, so as not to inundate the two valleys which open into the Rouxey gorge on either side of the Vilard peak. He and his heirs thus became the protectors of the village of Riceys, and so maintained their usurpation. This old murderer, renegade, and former Abbé de Watteville ended his career by planting trees and constructing a fine road on the flank of one of the Rouxeys, which led into the great mail highway. Belonging to the park and the château were large ill-cultivated domains, chalets on the slopes of the two mountains, and woods as yet unexplored. All was wild and solitary, guarded by Nature only, and left to the tangle of vegetation, but full of sublime nooks and aspects.

It is unnecessary to burden this history with a detailed account of the efforts and schemes, bearing the imprint of genius, by which Rosalie contrived, without exciting any suspicion, to attain her end. It is enough to say that she apparently obeyed her mother when she left Besançon in May, 1835, in an old travelling-carriage drawn by two good hired horses, and accompanied her father for a little visit to Les Rouxey.

Love explains all to young girls. When she rose on the morning after her arrival, and saw from her

bedroom window the beautiful sheet of water, above which the mists were rising like smoke and floating upward among the pines and larches which clothed the slopes of the mountain until they reached the summit, Mademoiselle de Watteville gave a cry of admiration.

“*They* loved each other beside a lake! *She* is by a lake! Yes, a lake is full of love.”

A lake fed by snows has the colors of an opal and the transparency of a diamond; and if shut in, like that of Rouzey, between two granite ledges clothed with black firs, where silence reigns, the silence of the steppes or the prairies, it inspires every one with the admiration which forced a cry from Rosalie.

“We owe that to the famous Watteville,” said her father.

“He wanted to win pardon for his crimes,” said the girl. “Let us get into that boat and go to the farther end of the lake; it will give us an appetite for breakfast.”

The baron sent for two young gardeners who knew how to row, and took his prime minister, Modinier, with him. They were soon at the upper end of the lake, which is bounded by the Dent de Vilard, the Jungfrau of this lesser Switzerland.

“Here we are, Monsieur le baron,” said Modinier,

making a sign to the two rowers to fasten the boat.

“Will you come and look at it?”

“Look at what?” asked Rosalie.

“Oh, nothing,” said the baron. “However, you are such a discreet girl, and we have had so many secrets together, that I can safely tell you what is troubling me. Since 1830, difficulties have sprung up between me and the township of Riceys about the Dent de Vilard; and I want to settle them without your mother finding it out; for she is so obstinate she is capable of setting everything on fire and flames; especially if she discovers that the mayor of Riceys, a republican, has invented this claim merely to ingratiate himself with his people.”

Rosalie had the coolness to conceal her joy so as to act with greater force upon her father.

“What claim?” she asked.

“Mademoiselle,” said Modinier, “the people of Riceys have long had the right of pasture and of cutting wood on their side of the Dent de Vilard. Now Monsieur Chantonit, their mayor since 1830, insists that the mountain belongs wholly to his township, and that over a hundred years ago the villagers had a right of way through our land. You see, we should have no privacy at all in that case. Besides, this brute would soon say — what the old men of Riceys say now — that the whole ground the lake covers was

unlawfully taken by the Abbé de Watteville, — and that, of course, would be the ruin of Les Rouxey.”

“Unfortunately, my dear, between ourselves, that’s all true,” said the bâron, candidly; “the land is a usurpation, legalized by the lapse of time. So, to prevent future trouble, I want to have my boundaries amicably settled; and when that is done I shall build a wall to mark them.”

“If you yield to the democracy,” said Rosalie, “it will eat you up. You ought to have threatened the Riceys people.”

“That is just what I was saying to Monsieur last night,” remarked Modinier. “And to strengthen it, I want him to find out if there are not, on this side of the Dent or on the other, somewhere, the signs of a boundary.”

“My dear father,” said Rosalie, returning to the boat, “I agree with Modinier. If you want to maintain your rights on the Dent de Vilard, you should act promptly, and obtain a legal decision which will secure you against the attempts of this Chantonnit. What are you afraid of? Employ that famous Monsieur Savarus; secure him at once, for fear Chantonnit should engage him for the township. The man who won the suit of the Chapter against the town will certainly be able to win that of the Wattevilles against Riceys. Besides,” she added, “Les Rouxey will one day be

mine (not for a long while yet, I hope) ; well, then, don't leave me at the mercy of a lawsuit. I like this place ; I shall often live here ; I shall improve it as much as I am able. On those slopes," she said, pointing to the sides of the hills, "I should thin out the trees and make delightful English gardens. Let us go back to Besançon now, and return with the Abbé de Grancey, Monsieur Savarus, and my mother, if she chooses to come. Then you can make up your mind ; but, if I were you, I should decide now. You are named Watteville, and yet you are afraid of a fight ! If you do lose your suit — come, I'll promise never to blame you."

"Oh, if you look at it that way," said the baron, "I am willing. I will go and see that lawyer."

"After all, a lawsuit is very amusing. It will give some interest to life ; there will be coming and going, and a thousand things to do before the case is tried. We did not see the Abbé de Grancey for three weeks when the Chapter's suit was going on, he was so busy."

"But that concerned the very existence of the Chapter," said Monsieur de Watteville. "Besides, the self-respect, the conscience of the archbishop, all that the priesthood depend on was at stake. That Savarus has no idea what he did for the Chapter ; he saved it."

"Listen to me," she whispered in his ear ; "if you

get Monsieur Savarus on your side you will be sure to win, won't you? Well, then, let me give you a bit of advice. You cannot get Monsieur Savarus to take the case unless through Monsieur de Grancey. Let us both speak, you and I, to the dear abbé without mamma being present; for I know a way to make him urge Monsieur Savarus to defend us."

"It will be very difficult to keep from telling your mother."

"The Abbé de Grancey will tell her later; but if you'll make up your mind to promise to vote for Monsieur Savarus at the next elections, you will get what you want."

"Go to the polls! Take the oath! I?" cried Monsieur de Watteville.

"Pooh!" she said.

"And what will your mother say?"

"Perhaps she would tell you to go," replied Rosalie, who knew from Albert's letter to Léopold of the abbé's promises.

Four days later the Abbé de Grancey paid a very early visit to Albert Savarus, having notified him the night before that he was coming. The purpose of the old priest was to retain the great lawyer for the Watteville interests, — a step which reveals the tact and cleverness which Rosalie had subterraneously employed.

“What can I do for you, Monsieur l’Abbé?” asked Savarus.

The abbé divulged his purpose with much friendliness, but was coldly listened to by Albert.

“Monsieur l’abbé,” said the latter, “it is impossible for me to take the case of the Watteville, and I will show you why. My rôle here consists in keeping to the strictest neutrality. I do not wish to be of any color or party at all. I desire to remain an enigma until the day of my election. To take the Watteville case would involve nothing at all in Paris; but here, where everything is talked about and commented on, I should be called a man of your faubourg Saint-Germain.”

“Now, do you suppose,” said the abbé, “that you can keep yourself unknown on the day of the election, when all the candidates attack one another. Everyone will know then that your name is Savaron de Savarus; that you were once Master of petitions, and a man of the Restoration.”

“On the election day,” said Savarus, “I shall be all that I ought to be. I intend to speak at the preparatory meetings.”

“If Monsieur de Watteville and his party support you, you will have a hundred solid votes, surer than those you are counting on; for dissensions can always be sown among self-interests, but you can’t separate those who are held together by convictions.”

“The devil!” cried Savarus. “I love you, and I would like to do all I can for you, Father. Is there any way of compromising with the devil? I might, perhaps, by employing Girardet, and guiding him secretly, make Monsieur de Watteville’s case drag on till after the elections. But I certainly will not take part in it myself till then.”

“Well, do one thing,” said the abbé; “come to hôtel de Rupt; there you’ll find a little girl of nineteen, who will some day have a hundred thousand francs a year in her own right; you can pretend to be paying her attentions.”

“Ah! that young girl I see sometimes in the kiosk?”

“Yes, Mademoiselle Rosalie,” continued the abbé. “You are ambitious; if you please her, you might become all that an ambitious man can make himself, — who knows? minister perhaps. A man can always be a minister when he has a hundred thousand francs a year joined to your astounding capacities.”

“Monsieur l’abbé,” said Albert, quickly; “Mademoiselle de Watteville might have three times that fortune, and even adore me, and it would still be impossible for me to marry her.”

“Are you married?” exclaimed the abbé.

“No, not in church, not before a mayor,” said Savarus, “but morally.”

“That is all the stronger when a man cares for it as much as I see you do,” replied the abbé. “However, all which is not done need not be done. Don’t rest everything, plans and fortune too, on the will of a woman ; a wise man does not wait for the shoes of a dead one to set foot on his way.”

“Let us say no more about Mademoiselle de Watteville,” said Albert, gravely, “but settle what we were speaking of. For your sake, and because I love and respect you, I will take Monsieur de Watteville’s case, but not appear in it till after the elections. Until then Girardet must conduct it according to my advice. That is all I can agree to do.”

“But there are points which cannot be decided on without an inspection of the locality,” said the vicar-general.

“Girardet can go,” said Savarus. “I cannot allow myself to take, under the eyes of this town which I know very well, a step which would compromise the immense stake I have in my election.”

The Abbé de Grancey parted from Savarus with a shrewd look, by which he seemed to laugh at the invulnerable resolution of the young athlete, all the while admiring his firmness.

“Ah!” cried Rosalie, the next day as she stood in the kiosk, and watched Albert in his study, having

heard of the result of the abbé's mission from Monsieur de Watteville, "I have driven my father into a lawsuit, I have moved heaven and earth to bring you here, — yes! I have committed a mortal sin for you, and you will not come to us, and I shall never hear that noble voice. You make conditions, do you, when the Wattevilles and the Rupts make advances? Well, then, God knows I meant to be contented with those little pleasures, — seeing you, listening to you, going to Rouxey with you to feel it blessed by your presence; I did not even wish for more — but now, now I will be your wife! Yes, gaze at *her* portrait, examine those drawings of *her* house, *her* room, the views of *her* villa and *her* gardens. You want her statue! I'll make that woman marble to you! She cannot love. Arts, science, books, music, — they have taken half her mind and half her senses. Besides, she is old, she is over thirty, and my Albert would be wretched with her."

"What are you doing here, Rosalie?" said her mother, coming into the kiosk, and scattering her reflections. "Monsieur de Soulas is in the salon; he took notice of your behavior, which certainly betrays more thought than you ought to have at your age."

"Is Monsieur de Soulas opposed to thinking?" asked Rosalie.

"Then you were thinking?" said Madame de Watteville.

“Yes, mamma.”

“No, you were not. You were gazing at the windows of that lawyer, with an interest that is neither proper nor decent, and which Monsieur de Soulas should be the last to remark.”

“Why?” asked Rosalie.

“Rosalie,” said the baroness, “it is high time you should know our intentions. Amédée likes you, and you will not be badly off as the Comtesse de Soulas.”

Pale as a lily Rosalie made no answer to her mother; the violence of her thwarted feelings made her stupid. But when she came into the presence of the man whom for the last few moments she had begun to hate, her lips took on a smile such as we see on those of opera dancers in a ballet. She was even able to laugh, and had the strength to hide her fury, which subsided as she suddenly resolved to employ that heavy, dull young man to carry out her schemes.

“Monsieur Amédée,” she said, when the baroness walked before them in the garden, affecting to leave the young people to themselves, “did you know that Monsieur Albert Savaron de Savarus is a legitimist?”

“Legitimist?”

“Yes; before 1830 he was Master of petitions to the Council of State, and secretary to the Council of ministers, and was much thought of by the Dauphin and Dauphiness. It would have been better if you had

never said a word against him, and now it will be better still if you will assist in electing him to the Chamber this year, and so prevent that poor Monsieur de Chavoncourt from representing the town of Besançon."

"What a sudden interest you seem to take in that lawyer."

"Monsieur Albert de Savarus, natural son of the Comte de Savarus (oh! pray don't say I told you all this), is to be our lawyer in the affair of Les Rouxey, provided he is elected. My father tells me that Les Rouxey is to be my property, and I mean to live there; it is enchanting. I should be in despair if that magnificent creation of the great Watteville were cut up."

"The deuce!" thought Amédée, as he left the hôtel de Rupt; "the heiress is not such a fool as her mother thinks she is."

Monsieur de Chavoncourt was a royalist who belonged to the famous 221. Accordingly, the day after the revolution of July, 1830, he began to preach the salutary doctrine of taking the oath and making a constitutional opposition to the existing order of things, like the Tories against the Whigs in England. This doctrine was not acceptable to the legitimists, who kept aloof under defeat, trusting to the force of inactivity and the help of Providence. Distrusted politically by his own social class, Monsieur de Chavoncourt seemed to the party of the *juste-milieu* the best choice they

could make ; they preferred the acceptance of his moderate opinions to the triumph of a republican by the votes of enthusiasts and “patriots.” Monsieur de Chavoncourt as a man was greatly respected in Besançon ; he came of an old parliamentary family ; his fortune, about fifteen thousand francs a year, excited little envy from the fact that he had a son and three daughters. Fifteen thousand francs a year is a mere nothing with such expenses. When, therefore, the father of a family in such circumstances is known to be incorruptible, how can his fellow-citizens avoid respecting him ? Voters are often enthusiastic over an ideal of parliamentary virtue, just as the gallery applauds an exhibition of generous sentiments which it does not practise.

Madame de Chavoncourt, then about forty years of age, was one of the handsomest women in Besançon. During the sessions of the Chamber she lived in a cheap way on one of their farms in the neighborhood, in order to economize the cost of Monsieur de Chavoncourt’s stay in Paris. During the winters she received her friends in a suitable manner once a week on Tuesdays, and she thoroughly understood her vocation as hostess. Young de Chavoncourt, her son, then about twenty-two years old, was extremely intimate with another young man, Monsieur de Vauchelles, who was also a college friend of Amédée de Soulas. They

walked together, hunted together, and were known to be so inseparable that they were usually invited together. Rosalie, who was equally intimate with the Chavoncourt sisters, knew very well that the three young men had no secrets from each other. She reflected that if Monsieur de Soulas betrayed her confidence it would be to these intimate friends. Now, Monsieur de Vauchelles had his own marriage scheme, as Amédée had his; he wanted to marry Victoire, the eldest Chavoncourt sister, on whom an old aunt had settled a domain worth seven thousand francs a year, and a dowry of a hundred thousand francs in money. Victoire was her goddaughter and her favorite niece. It was certain therefore that young de Vauchelles and de Chavoncourt would inform Monsieur de Chavoncourt of the opposition which Albert was about to make to his election.

But this was not enough for Rosalie. She wrote an anonymous letter with her left hand to the Prefect of the department, signing it "A friend to Louis-Philippe," in which she informed him of the secret intentions of Monsieur Albert de Savarus, pointing out to him the dangerous help a royalist orator would give to Berryer, and betraying Albert's whole scheme and conduct in coming to Besançon, as she had read it in his letters. The Prefect, an able man, was personally inimical to the royalist party, and devoted, from con-

viction, to the government of July, — one of those men, in short, who made the minister of the Interior declare, “We have a *good* prefect at Besançon.” The Prefect read the letter, and obeyed the injunction it contained to burn it.

Rosalie’s object was to make Albert lose his election, and keep him five years longer in Besançon.

In those days the elections were a struggle between parties, and in order to gain an advantage the ministry selected both the time and place for the contest. The election was now appointed to take place at the end of three months. When a man has staked his whole life upon the turn of an election, the time which elapses between the ordinance issued and the day fixed is a period during which his ordinary life is at a standstill. Rosalie fully understood the chances that this gave her. She compelled Mariette (whom, as she afterwards admitted, she promised to take into her service with Jérôme) to bring to her all the letters which Albert received, and all those which he sent to Italy. While thus employed in manœuvring these plans this astounding young girl was working at her father’s slippers with an ingenuous air; in fact, she increased the candor and innocence of her manner, being well aware that they served her purpose.

“My daughter is growing really charming,” said Madame de Watteville.

Two months before the elections a meeting took place at the house of Monsieur Boucher, the head of the company of the "Revue de l'Est," at which were present the contractor who hoped for the building of the bridge and the waterworks at Arcier, the father-in-law of Monsieur Boucher, Monsieur Granet, the influential man already mentioned to whom Albert had done a service, and who intended to propose him as a candidate, the lawyer Girardet, the printer of the "Revue," and the president of the Court of commerce. There were present about twenty-seven persons, all, in provincial language, "big-wigs." Each of them represented at least six votes; at first the number was estimated at ten, for persons always begin by exaggerating their own influence. Among these twenty-seven persons was a friend of the Prefect, a man with a secret hope of obtaining something for himself and his family from the administration. At this first meeting it was agreed, with an enthusiasm little to be expected in Besançon, to present the lawyer Savaron as candidate for election.

While waiting in his study until Alfred Boucher should summon him to the meeting Albert received a visit from the Abbé de Grancey, who was deeply interested in his vast ambition. Albert recognized the great political capacity of the priest, and the priest, touched by the young man's entreaty, had served him as guide

and counsellor in the present struggle. The Chapter did not like Monsieur de Chavoncourt, partly for his opinions, and partly because the brother-in-law of his wife was president of the court in which they were defeated in the first trial of their famous case.

“My dear son,” began the shrewd and worthy abbé, in the calm and gentle voice that characterizes an old priest, “you are betrayed.”

“Betrayed!” cried the lover, struck to the heart.

“By whom I do not yet know,” continued the priest, “but the Prefect knows all your plans and sees your game. I can’t give you any advice at this moment. Such matters have to be studied. As to the meeting of this evening, you had better take the bull by the horns and meet the attack which will be made against you shortly. Relate your past life and tell your purpose; in this way you will lessen the effect the discovery will produce in Besançon.”

“Oh, I expected this!” said Savarus, in a changed voice.

“You would not take my advice when I gave you the opportunity to go to the hôtel de Rupt. You don’t know what you might have gained by going there.”

“What should I have gained?”

“The unanimous support of the royalists, — a momentary agreement which would have brought to your election at least a hundred votes. By adding those to

what we call among ourselves the "ecclesiastical vote," though you might not have been nominated, you were certain of election by the ballot."

When Alfred Boucher came in, full of enthusiasm, to announce the decision of the informal meeting, he found the lawyer and the vicar-general cool, calm, and exceedingly grave.

"Adieu, Monsieur l'abbé," said Savarus, "we will talk of your affair as soon as the election is over."

Then he took Boucher's arm, after pressing the abbé's hand significantly. The priest turned and gazed at the ambitious man, whose face at that moment wore the look that a general's must wear when he hears the first cannon of the coming battle. The abbé raised his eyes to heaven as he left the room, saying to himself, "Oh, what a priest he would have made!"

Eloquence does not really belong to the bar. It is seldom that a lawyer displays the true powers of his soul; if he did, he would die of it in a few years. Neither is eloquence found in the pulpit of to-day. There are moments in the Chamber of Deputies when some ambitious man, staking all to win all, and pricked by a thousand arrows, bursts forth eloquently at a given moment. But this is more likely to happen with certain rare souls during the fateful quarter of an hour when success hangs in the balance,

and they are called upon to speak. At this meeting Albert Savarus, feeling the necessity of obtaining adherents, brought every faculty of his soul and all the resources of his mind to bear upon his object.

He entered the room where the meeting was in progress admirably, without either awkwardness or assumption, without timidity or weakness, but with gravity, and found himself in the midst of some thirty or more persons — for a rumor of the meeting and its decision had brought in a few more sheep, docile to their bell-wether. Before listening to Monsieur Boucher, who was about to make him a speech on the resolution of the committee, Albert requested silence by a gesture, at the same time pressing Monsieur Boucher's hand to warn him of some sudden danger.

“My young friend, Alfred Boucher, has just brought me word of the honor which has been done to me. But before this decision becomes definitive,” said Savarus, “I think it my duty to explain to you fully who your candidate is, so as to leave you free to withdraw your promises if my declarations should trouble your consciences.”

This exordium produced an instantaneous silence. Some present thought the action a very noble one.

Albert explained his past life; gave his full name; stated his position under the Restoration, and asserted that he was making himself a new career since

his arrival in Besançon, giving at the same time pledges for the future. His audience hung breathless on his words. These men, actuated by so many diverse interests, were subjugated by the eloquence which came rushing from the heart and soul of the ambitious man. Admiration hindered all reflection. Those present saw but one thing,—the thing that Albert wished them to see.

Was it not better, they said to themselves, that the town should be represented by a man evidently destined to govern, rather than by a mere voting mechanism? A statesman was an actual power; a commonplace deputy, however incorruptible, was only a conscience. What glory Provence had acquired by comprehending the genius of Mirabeau, and by sending to the Chamber since 1830 the only statesman produced by the revolution of July.

Under pressure of Albert's eloquence, all present believed him fitted to become, as their representative, a magnificent political instrument. They saw a future minister in the man. His profession of faith, his avowal of ambition, and the recital of his career were, in the words of one present who afterwards became one of the ablest men in Besançon, "a masterpiece of skill, sentiment, fervor, shrewdness, and seduction." The whirlwind of his eloquence caught up the electors. No man had ever a greater triumph.

But, unfortunately, spoken words, weapons for close range, have only an immediate effect. If a vote could have been taken then, most assuredly Albert's name would have issued from the urn. For the time being he was conqueror. But to succeed he would have to conquer daily for two months. He left the meeting throbbing with hope. Applauded to the echo, he knew he had won the great result of forestalling and killing the gossip to which the rumor of his antecedents would otherwise give rise. The commercial class in Besançon accepted Monsieur Savaron de Savarus as its candidate.

The Prefect, alarmed at this success, began to count up and marshal the ministerial votes. He sought and obtained a secret interview with Monsieur de Chavoncourt, with the object of a coalition for their mutual interests. Every day (though Albert was unable to discover how and why it was) the support of the Boucher committee dwindled. One month before the elections he found he could hardly count on sixty votes. The quiet underhand work of the Prefecture was irresistible. Three or four clever men suggested to clients who had employed Savarus, "If he is made deputy he cannot attend to your affairs. How can he give you advice, or draw your deeds and your conveyances? You could have his services five years more if, instead of sending him to the Chamber now,

you held out hopes of it at the following elections." This argument was all the more injurious to Savarus because the wives of several of his clients took it up. The contractor and others interested in the bridges and waterworks at Arcier were made to see, in a conference with a clever emissary, that the promotion of their interests really lay with the Prefecture, and not with an ambitious deputy.

Every day brought some new defeat; though every day he waged his battle, — a battle directed by himself but fought by his lieutenants; a battle of words, speeches, measures. He dared not go to the vicar-general, and the vicar-general no longer came to him. Albert rose in the mornings and went to bed at night with fever in his pulses and his brain on fire.

At last the day came for the first struggle, — that of the preparatory meeting, as it is called, where preliminary votes are given, where the candidates can judge of their chances, and wise heads foresee either failure or success. It is a scene like the English "hustings," and, except that it is decent and without the mob, as terrible. The emotions felt have no physical expression, as in England, but they are none the less intense. The English manage the matter with fists, the French with phrases. Our neighbors fight a battle; we play our game with cool manœuvres calmly elaborated. This political act is performed by each of the two nations in a manner the exact reverse of their two natures.

The radical candidate appeared ; Monsieur de Chavoncourt presented himself ; then Albert, who was at once accused by the radicals and the Chavoncourt committee of being a legitimist unreconciled, — another Berryer. The administration also had its candidate. Thus divided, the votes of course gave no result. The republican candidate had twenty, the ministry fifty, Albert seventy, and Monsieur de Chavoncourt sixty-eight. But for this preliminary count the treacherous Prefecture had thrown some thirty of its votes for Albert for the purpose of misleading its adversaries ; its real force was over eighty votes, and if those cast for Monsieur de Chavoncourt, together with those of a few radicals, could be diverted it was master of the situation. One hundred and forty votes were still to be heard from, — those of Monsieur de Grancey and the legitimists. A preparatory meeting is to the real election what a rehearsal is to a play, — the most misleading thing in the world.

Albert Savarus returned home, holding his head high, but dying at heart. Two men who were devoted to him but who were voting in the enemies' camp had contrived to let him know towards the end of the meeting that thirty of the votes deposited for him were a blind. A criminal marching to execution never suffered more than Albert as he walked home that night from the house where his fate was staked. The

unhappy man would let no one accompany him. He walked alone through the streets between eleven o'clock and midnight.

At one in the morning Savarus, who had not slept for three nights, was still sitting in his library, pale as death, his hands and arms pendent, in an attitude of utter abandonment that might have served for the Magdalen. Tears were beneath his long eyelashes, — those tears that wet the eyes but do not fall, for thought drinks them, the fire of the soul dries their moisture. In solitude he could weep. He saw through the window a white form hovering in the kiosk which recalled to him Francesca.

“It is now three months since She has written to me! What has become of her? Is she ill? Oh, my love, my life! will you ever know all that I have suffered? What a fatal organization is mine! Have I an aneurism?” he asked, feeling his heart beat so violently that its pulsations echoed in the utter silence like atoms of sand falling upon iron.

At that instant three distinct raps were given upon Albert's door. He opened it instantly, and came near fainting when he saw the face of the vicar-general, beaming with joy and an air of triumph. He caught the abbé in his arms without a word, pressed him tightly, and let his head fall on the shoulder of the old man, weeping as he had wept on the night he first

knew that Francesca was married. To the priest alone could he show his weakness.

“Forgive me, dear abbé,” he said, “but you have come at one of those supreme moments in life when our manhood vanishes, — for you must not think me a man of mere vulgar ambitions.”

“I know, I know!” said the abbé. “You wrote that story of ‘Ambition through Love’! Ah, my son, despair in love made me a priest in 1786, when I was twenty-two years old. In 1788 I was a curate. I know life. I have refused three bishoprics; I wish to die in Besançon.”

“Come and see Her,” cried Savarus, taking a candle and leading the abbé into his study, where was the portrait of the Duchesse d’Argaiolo, which he lighted up.

“She is one of the women who are made to reign,” said the vicar, comprehending the true affection which Albert proved to him by this mute confidence. “But there is pride on that brow, implacable pride; she would never forgive an injury. It is the archangel Michael, the avenging angel, the inflexible angel. All or nothing! that is the motto of those angelic characters. There is something, I know not what, divinely untamable in that head.”

“Ah, you have divined her!” cried Savarus. “For twelve years, dear abbé, she has ruled my life and I have never had one thought unfaithful to her — ”

“Would that you had done as much for God!” exclaimed the abbé, naïvely. “But now let us talk of your affairs. For the last ten days I have been working for you. If you are a true politician you will take my advice this time. You would not be where you are now if you had gone to the hôtel de Rupt as I told you to do. But you must go there to-morrow evening; I will present you. The estate of Rouxey is in danger, and you must argue the case within the next two days, and the election does not take place till the third day. Care will be taken, however, not to come to any result on that day. There will be several ballots, and you will get your election through balloting.”

“But how?”

“If you win the Rouxey suit you are sure of eighty legitimist votes; add those to the thirty I hold, that makes a hundred and ten; with twenty the Boucher committee still have, you can count on one hundred and thirty votes.”

“Yes,” said Albert; “but I need sixty-five more.”

“I know that; and all the rest belong at present to the administration. But you can really have two hundred votes if you choose, while the prefecture will have only one hundred and eighty.”

“How can I have two hundred votes?” said Albert, who had sprung to his feet as if moved by springs, and now stood rigid with astonishment.

"You will have the votes of Monsieur de Chavoncourt," replied the abbé.

"How?"

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt."

"Never."

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt," repeated the abbé, coldly.

"Look! you said yourself she was implacable," said Albert, pointing to the portrait of Francesca.

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt," said the priest, coldly, for the third time.

This time Albert understood him. He saw that the vicar-general would not personally meddle in a matter which would lift him out of his despair. A word more would have compromised his dignity as a priest.

"To-morrow evening you will meet Madame de Chavoncourt at the hôtel de Rupt, and you will thank her for all she proposes to do for you. You can tell her your gratitude is boundless, and that you belong body and soul to her and to her family. You will have a passage at arms with Madame de Chavoncourt, who will want to obtain some promise from you. Your future lies in to-morrow evening, my son. But remember, I have had nothing to do with all this. I am responsible only for the legitimist votes; I have won Madame de Watteville for you, and with her all the aristocracy

of Besançon. Amédée de Soulas and de Vauchelles, who will vote for you, lead the young men, and Madame de Watteville the old ones. As to the votes I control they are infallible."

"Who has influenced Madame de Chavoncourt?" said Savarus.

"Ask no questions," replied the abbé. "Monsieur de Chavoncourt, who has three daughters to marry, cannot increase his fortune. If Vauchelles marries the eldest without dowry from him (her aunt having provided for her), what is he to do with the other two? Some one has suggested to Madame de Chavoncourt that she had better marry one of them, rather than let her husband go to Paris and spend money. Some one leads Madame de Chavoncourt, and Madame de Chavoncourt leads her husband."

"That's enough, my dear abbé; I understand. If I am made a deputy, I must make somebody's fortune, and that will release me of all obligation. In me you will have a son, — a man who will owe his happiness to you. Good heavens! what have I done to deserve such kindness?"

"You saved the Chapter," said the abbé, smiling. "Keep all this as secret as the grave. We priests have nothing to do with it. If it were known that we meddled in the elections, those puritans of the Left would eat us alive, and we should be blamed by those

of our own party who want the management in their own hands. Madame de Chavoncourt knows nothing of my part in all this. I have trusted no one but Madame de Watteville, who can be counted on like one of ourselves."

"I shall bring the duchess here that you may bless our union," cried Savarus.

After showing the abbé to the door Albert went to bed and to sleep, wrapped in dreams of power.

V.

AT nine o'clock the next evening the salons of Madame la Baronne de Watteville were, as may readily be imagined, full to overflowing with the Besancian aristocracy, specially invited for the occasion. Every one was discussing the *exception* they proposed to make in taking part in the election. It was known that a former Master of petitions, the late secretary of one of the most faithful ministers of the Eldest Branch, was to be introduced. Madame de Chavoncourt was there, with her second daughter, Sidonie, charmingly dressed, while the eldest, sure of her marriage, had recourse to no special toilet artifices. Such little matters are noticed in the provinces. The Abbé de Grancey, with his fine, shrewd head, moved about from group to group, listening to all but mingling with none, and saying every now and then those incisive words which sum up questions or suggest them.

“If the Eldest Branch were to return,” he remarked to a septuagenarian politician, “what sort of statesmanship would it find now? Berryer, alone upon his bench, can do nothing; but give him sixty votes, and

he could trip up the government on many occasions, and overthrow their administrations."

"The Duc de Fitz-james is to be elected at Toulouse —"

"If you vote for Monsieur de Savarus, the republicans will join you rather than vote with the *juste-milieu*," etc.

At nine o'clock Albert had not arrived. Madame de Watteville was inclined to regard the delay as an impertinence on his part.

"Oh, no, madame," said Madame de Chavoncourt; "we must not allow such really serious matters to be affected by a trifle, — a varnished boot not quite dry, a legal consultation at the last moment, may detain him."

Rosalie looked askance at Madame de Chavoncourt.

"She is very considerate of Monsieur de Savarus," she whispered to her mother.

"Oh," replied Madame de Watteville, smiling, "there is some talk of a marriage between Sidonie and Monsieur de Savarus."

Mademoiselle de Watteville turned and went hastily to a window overlooking the garden.

At ten o'clock Albert de Savarus had not appeared. The muttering storm now burst. Some of the guests went to the card-tables, finding the delay intolerable. The Abbé de Grancey, who knew not what to think,

walked to the window where Rosalie was hidden, and said aloud, so bewildered was he, "He must be dead." Then he opened the window and stepped into the garden, followed by Monsieur de Watteville and his daughter. All three went to the kiosk. Albert's rooms were closed and no lights visible.

"Jérôme!" cried Rosalie, seeing the servant in the courtyard. The abbé looked at her with amazement. "Where is your master?" she asked when Jérôme came to the foot of the wall.

"Gone — in a post-chaise, mademoiselle."

"Lost!" exclaimed the abbé de Grancey, — "or happy!"

The light of triumph on Rosalie's face was not so quickly hidden but that the vicar-general saw it, though he feigned to see nothing.

"What has that young girl had to do with all this?" thought the priest.

All three returned to the salon, where Monsieur de Watteville announced the strange and startling news of the departure of Monsieur de Savarus in a post-chaise, apparently without giving any reasons for his disappearance. By half-past eleven only a dozen persons were left in the salon, among them Madame de Chavoncourt and her two daughters, Monsieur de Vauchelles, the Abbé de Grancey and the Abbé de Godegars, another vicar-general, who was seeking to be a

bishop, and Amédée de Soulas. The Abbé de Grancey placed himself by Madame de Watteville in a position which enabled him to keep his eye on Rosalie, whose face, usually so pale, was now flushed with fever.

“What can have happened to Monsieur de Savarus?” Madame de Chavoncourt was saying.

Just then a servant in livery handed a note on a silver tray to the Abbé de Grancey.

“Read your letter,” said the baroness.

The vicar-general read it, noticing that Rosalie turned as white as her handkerchief.

“She knows the writing,” thought the abbé after glancing at the girl above his spectacles. He folded the letter and put it quietly into his pocket without a word. In three minutes he received three looks from Rosalie which enabled him to guess all.

“She loves Albert Savarus!” thought he.

The abbé rose, took leave, and went towards the door. In the second salon Rosalie joined him.

“It was from *Albert*,” she said.

“How do you know his writing well enough to distinguish it at that distance?”

The young girl, thus caught in the meshes of her own impatient anger, said a thing which the abbé thought sublime.

“Because I love him! — What has happened?” she added after a pause.

“He renounces his election,” replied the abbé.

Rosalie laid a finger on her lips.

“I ask you to grant me the secrecy of the confessional on all this,” she said before she left him to return to the salon. “If there is no election there’ll be no marriage with Sidonie,” she thought, as she walked back.

The next morning on her way to mass Mademoiselle de Watteville heard from Mariette some of the circumstances which led to Albert’s departure at the most critical moment of his life.

“Mademoiselle,” said Mariette, “an old gentleman arrived from Paris yesterday at the Hôtel National in his own carriage, a fine carriage with four horses, an outrider and a valet. Jérôme, who saw him when he drove away, says he must be a prince or a milord.”

“Did the carriage have a ducal coronet?” asked Rosalie.

“I don’t know,” said Mariette. “It was about two o’clock when he came to the house and sent up his card to Monsieur Savarus. When Monsieur saw it Jérôme says he turned as white as a sheet, and told him to show the gentleman up. As Monsieur locked the door after him it was impossible to hear what was said. They were together nearly an hour; then the old gentleman, accompanied by Monsieur, came out and called for his own servant. Jérôme saw this man bring down an

immense package four feet long which looked like a picture, and put it in the carriage. The old gentleman followed with a large bundle of papers in his hand. Monsieur Savarus, as pale as if he was going to die, — he so proud, so dignified! — was in a pitiable state. But he was very respectful to the old gentleman; he could n't have been more so to the king. Jérôme and Monsieur Albert stood at the door of the carriage, which was already harnessed with the four horses, and was driven away just at three o'clock. Then Monsieur went straight to the Prefecture, and from there to Monsieur Gentillet, who sold him the travelling-carriage of the late Madame de Vier; after which he ordered post-horses to be ready at six. Then he came home and packed up some things, and wrote some notes, and sent for Monsieur Girardet, who came and stayed with him till seven o'clock. Jérôme took a note to Monsieur Boucher, where Monsieur Savarus was engaged to dine. Then about half-past seven Monsieur went away, paying Jérôme three months' wages, and telling him to find another place. He left his keys with Monsieur Girardet, with whom, Jérôme says, he went home and got some soup; and after that he got into the carriage more dead than alive, and Jérôme heard him tell the postilion to take the Geneva road."

"Did Jérôme ask the name of the old gentleman at the Hôtel National?"

“Yes, but as he only stopped there an hour or two they had not taken his name. The servants, under orders I dare say, pretended not to speak French.”

“Who brought the letter to the Abbé de Grancey which came so late?”

“Probably Monsieur Savarus gave it to Monsieur Girardet to deliver ; but Jérôme says that poor Monsieur Girardet, who loved Monsieur Savarus, was nearly as much upset as he was. He who comes in mystery goes in mystery, as Mademoiselle Galard says.”

After hearing this account of Albert's departure Mademoiselle de Watteville became so absorbed in her own thoughts that everybody noticed it. It is useless to dwell on the excitement caused in Besançon by the disappearance of the lawyer. It was known that the Prefect had hastened with the utmost courtesy to fill out his passport for foreign parts, which relieved the administration of its only adversary. The next day Monsieur de Chavoncourt was nominated by a majority of a hundred and forty votes.

This strange event strengthened the prejudice felt in Besançon against all strangers. At the end of ten days not a word more was said of Albert Savarus. Three persons only, the lawyer Girardet, the vicar-general, and Rosalie, were seriously affected by his disappearance. Girardet knew that the white-haired old gentleman was the Prince Soderini, for he had seen his card,

and he told this to the vicar-general. But Rosalie, who was far better informed, had known for the last three months of the death of the Duc d'Argaiolo.

At the end of the month of April, 1836, nine months after the above events, no one had heard anything of Albert Savarus. Jérôme and Mariette were thinking of being married, but the baroness told her maid, confidentially, to wait awhile, as the marriage of her daughter would soon take place, and the weddings could be celebrated together.

"It is time to marry Rosalie," she said to Monsieur de Watteville. "She is nearly twenty, and for the last few months she has changed dreadfully."

"I am sure I don't know what is the matter with her," said the baron.

"If fathers don't know what is the matter with their daughters, mothers do," replied the baroness; "she must be married."

"I am willing," said the baron, "and for my share I'll give her Les Rouxey, — now that the court has settled the matter with the township of Riceys. The Riceys people have n't appealed, so the case is ended."

"You seemed never to have guessed," said the baroness, "that the decision not to appeal cost me thirty thousand francs, which I paid to Chantonnit, the mayor. Money was all that peasant wanted, and he

simply sold us peace. If you give away Les Rouxey, you won't have a penny of your own left."

"I don't need much," said the baron. "I sha'n't live long."

"You eat like an ogre."

"Exactly, but the more I eat the weaker my legs get."

"Because you will use that turning-machine."

"I don't know about that," said the baron.

"Well, we must marry Rosalie to Monsieur de Soulas; if you do give her Les Rouxey at least reserve the right to live there. For my part, I will give her fifteen thousand francs a year from the Funds. They can live with us, and I don't think they'll be unhappy."

"No, I shall give them Les Rouxey outright; Rosalie is fond of Les Rouxey."

"You are very singular in your regard for your daughter. You never ask me if I like Les Rouxey!"

Rosalie was called, and informed that she was to marry Monsieur Amédée de Soulas at the beginning of May.

"I thank you, mamma, and you, papa, for having thought of my establishment," she said; "but I don't wish to marry; I am very happy as I am, here with you."

"Girlish nonsense!" said the baroness; "you are not in love with Monsieur de Soulas, that's all."

“If you wish to know the truth, I will never marry Monsieur de Soulas.”

“Pooh! the ‘never’ of a girl of twenty!” said Madame de Watteville, with a sour smile.

“The ‘never’ of a de Watteville,” said Rosalie in a significant tone. “My father does not intend, I presume, to marry me without my consent.”

“Oh, heavens, no!” said the poor baron, looking tenderly at his daughter.

“Very good,” said the baroness, controlling her wrath at being suddenly and unexpectedly braved; “you may take upon yourself, Monsieur de Watteville, the duty of establishing your daughter. But remember, mademoiselle, if you marry against my wishes you will get nothing from me for your establishment.”

The quarrel thus begun between Madame de Watteville and the baron, who stood by his daughter, went to such lengths that Rosalie and her father were finally obliged to live the whole summer at Les Rouxey, the hôtel de Rupt being made intolerable to them. It thus became known in Besançon that Mademoiselle de Watteville had positively refused to marry Monsieur le Comte de Soulas.

After Jérôme and Mariette were married they went to live at Les Rouxey, under promise from Rosalie that they should one day succeed Modinier. The baron repaired and restored the Hermitage according to his

daughter's taste. When Madame de Watteville discovered that the cost of these improvements was over sixty thousand francs, and that Rosalie and her father were building greenhouses out of her money; she perceived the leaven of malice in her daughter's mind. Besides this, the baron bought several additional bits of land and a small domain, for all of which he paid about thirty thousand francs. It was told to Madame de Watteville that Rosalie, away from her control, showed all the signs of a strong-minded girl; she studied the means of making Les Rouxey profitable; she rode on horseback about the place; and her father, whom she made both comfortable and happy, complained no longer of his health, grew fat, and accompanied his daughter on all her excursions.

On the occasion of Madame de Watteville's fête-day the vicar-general drove out to Les Rouxey, sent no doubt by the baroness and Monsieur de Soulas to negotiate a peace between the mother and daughter.

"That little Rosalie has brains, after all," they said in Besançon.

The baroness, who was determined not to put herself in the wrong, had paid the eighty thousand francs which her husband and Rosalie had spent on Les Rouxey, and she had also sent her husband a thousand francs a month for their expenses of living. The father and daughter were very willing to go to Besan-

çon for the fête-day, and to remain there till the end of the month. When the vicar-general after dinner drew Mademoiselle de Watteville apart to open the question of marriage, and make her understand, once for all, that she must not any longer think of Albert, of whom no news had been obtained for over a year, Rosalie stopped him short by a gesture. The strange girl took the old abbé by the arm and led him to a bench beneath a clump of rhododendrons, which overlooked the lake.

“Listen, dear abbé, you whom I love as much as I love my own father, for you have shown a true affection for my Albert. The time has come for me to tell you that I have committed crimes in order to be his wife, and that he must be my husband. Read this.”

She drew a newspaper from the pocket of her apron, which she gave to the abbé, pointing to an article under the heading, “Florence, May 25th,” which read as follows:—

“The marriage of Monsieur le Duc de Rhétoré, eldest son of Monsieur le Duc de Chaulieu, to Madame la Duchesse d’Argaiolo, *née* Princesse Soderini, was celebrated yesterday with great splendor. Numerous fêtes, given in honor of this marriage, will enliven Florence during the coming weeks. The fortune of Madame d’Argaiolo is one of the largest in Italy, the late duke having left her his entire property.”

“The woman he loved is married,” cried Rosalie.
“I separated them.”

“You!” exclaimed the abbé, “How did you do it?”

Rosalie was about to reply when the splash of a fall into the water, and a cry from the gardeners interrupted her words. She rose and ran forward, crying out, “Oh, father!” for she saw him nowhere.

In trying to reach a piece of granite, on which he may have seen the print of a shell, for he was studying certain fossil remains, Monsieur de Watteville had gone too near the edge of the bank and lost his balance, falling into the lake at its deepest part, which was just at the foot of the cliff. The gardeners had much difficulty in recovering him from the mud and slime into which he had plunged and was then struggling. As the baron had dined heavily the shock of the fall interrupted his digestion. When he was undressed, cleaned, and put to bed his condition was so evidently serious that two servants were despatched on horseback, one to Besançon for his wife, the other to the nearest physician and surgeon. When Madame de Watteville arrived, eight hours later, with the principal physician of Besançon, Monsieur de Watteville’s condition was already hopeless, in spite of the intelligent care of the Rouxey doctor. The shock had produced a serious infiltration of the brain, and the checked digestion assisted in killing the unlucky baron.

This death, which would certainly not have taken place, said Madame de Watteville, if her husband had remained in Besançon, was attributed by her to her daughter's obstinacy; and she now showed a marked aversion to Rosalie, giving way to a grief that was evidently exaggerated, and calling the baron her "dear lamb." The last of the Wattevilles was buried on an islet in the lake, where the baroness erected a gothic monument in white marble, like that said to be for Héloïse in Père-Lachaise.

A month after this event the baroness and her daughter were living in the hôtel de Rupt, in savage silence. Rosalie was a prey to deep distress, which could seek no comfort from without. She reproached herself bitterly for her father's death, and feared another and even greater misfortune, which was certainly her work and hers only. No one, neither the lawyer Girardet nor the Abbé de Grancey, had obtained the slightest clue to Albert's fate. This utter silence terrified her. At last, in a paroxysm of repentance, she felt the need of confessing to the vicar-general the shocking manœuvres by which she had separated Francesca and Albert.

They were very simple, and yet powerful. Rosalie had suppressed all Albert's letters to the duchess; also the letter in which Francesca told her friend that the duke was ill, and informed him that she

could not write again during the time she was engaged in nursing the dying man. Thus, while Albert was occupied in preparing for the election, the duchess had written to him only twice, once to announce the duke's illness, and next to tell him she was a widow, — two noble and sublime letters, which Rosalie had kept. After practising for many nights the girl had succeeded in imitating Albert's handwriting. She suppressed the real letters of the faithful lover and substituted three others, the rough copies of which made the old priest shudder when he read them, so horribly did the genius of Evil appear there in all its perfection. In the first, Rosalie, writing in Albert's name, prepared the duchess for a change in his feelings; and in the last, she replied to the announcement of the duke's death by an intimation of Albert's approaching marriage with Mademoiselle de Watteville. The infernal cleverness with which the letters were written so amazed the vicar-general that he read them twice over. In reply to the last, Francesca, wounded to the heart by the girl who had vowed to kill her rival's love, wrote the simple words, "You are free; farewell."

"The most infamous crimes and the most odious are those which human justice can never reach," said the abbé, sternly. "But God often punishes them in this world; in that lies the meaning of the awful misfortunes which we think inexplicable. Of all the secret

crimes buried in the mysteries of private life, one of the vilest and most dishonoring is that of opening a letter or reading it surreptitiously. Whoever is guilty of that act, no matter who it is nor what reason may have led to the act, has stained his or her character irretrievably. Are you able to feel the truth in that most touching, most divine story of the young page, falsely accused, who carried the letter containing the order for his own death, and made the journey without one hesitating thought, and whom Providence protected and saved—saved miraculously, as we choose to say? Do you know in what that miracle consisted? Virtue has an ægis as powerful as that of innocent childhood. I tell you these things not to admonish you,” said the old priest, with deep sadness. “I am not here as your confessor; you are not kneeling at the feet of God. I am a friend, terrified at the prospect of your coming punishment. Alas! what has become of your victim, that poor Albert? Can he have killed himself? There was untold violence beneath that calm exterior. I see now that the father of the Duchesse d’Argaiolo, the old Prince Soderini, must have come to demand the letters and portrait of his daughter. That was the thunderbolt which fell on Albert’s head,—he must of course have sought to justify himself, and for that he left Besançon. But why, in fourteen months, have we heard nothing of him?”

“If I marry him he shall be so happy —”

“Happy? he does not love you. You have nothing to give him. Your mother has the deepest aversion to you ever since you made her that savage answer which stabbed her, and will prove your worldly ruin; I mean what you said to her yesterday when she told you that obedience would still repair your wrong-doing, and urged you to marry Amédée. Did you or did you not reply, ‘If you love him so much marry him yourself’? Answer, yes or no?”

“Yes,” said Rosalie.

“I know her well,” said the abbé; “in three months she will be Comtesse de Soulas; she will certainly have children, she will give half her income to her husband, and will reduce your share in the property as much as possible. You will be poor all her life, and she is only thirty-eight years old. All you will have is the estate of Les Rouxey, even supposing your mother agrees to relinquish her rights in it. From the point of view of material interests alone you have mismanaged your life; under that of feeling and sentiment you have ruined it. Instead of coming to your mother —”

Rosalie made a savage motion of her head.

“— to your mother,” continued the priest, “and to your religion, which, at the first ill-regulated impulses of your heart, could have enlightened, advised, and

guided you, you chose to follow your own will, ignorant as you were of life, and heeding nothing but your passion."

These words terrified Mademoiselle de Watteville.

"What must I do?" she said.

"To repair your faults, we must first know the extent of the evil you have done," replied the abbé.

"I will write to the only man who is likely to have any information about Albert, —Monsieur Léopold Hannequin, a notary in Paris, who has been his life-long friend."

"Write nothing unless to tell the truth," said the vicar-general. "Give me the real letters and the false ones, make your confession to me in detail as you would to the director of your conscience, asking me for the means of expiating your sin, and relying upon me. I will see what can be done—for, above all things, you must make plain the innocence of that unhappy man to the eyes of her whom he made his god on earth. He has lost his happiness, but he must have his vindication."

Rosalie promised the vicar-general to obey him, hoping that the steps he took would have the result of bringing Albert back to her.

Not long after the confession of Mademoiselle de Watteville a clerk of Monsieur Léopold Hannequin came to Besançon furnished with a general power of

attorney from Albert Savarus. He went, in the first instance, to Monsieur Girardet and requested him to take steps to sell the house which the lawyer had bought for his election. The clerk sold the furniture of the apartment, and with the proceeds paid Monsieur Girardet five thousand francs which he had advanced to Monsieur Savarus on the evening of his inexplicable departure. When Girardet inquired what had become of the brave and noble man in whom he had felt such interest, the clerk replied that no one knew except Monsieur Hannequin, who was deeply distressed by news contained in the last letter he had received from Monsieur de Savarus.

Learning all this, the vicar-general wrote to Monsieur Hannequin, and received the following reply :

“ PARIS, October, 1836.

“ TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE GRANCEY,
Vicar-general of the Diocese of Besançon :

“ Alas ! monsieur, it is beyond the power of any one to bring Albert back to the life of this world ; he has renounced it. He is now a novice at La Grande-Chartreuse, near Grenoble. You know, better than I who have just learned it, that all things earthly die on the threshold of that cloister. Foreseeing my visit, Albert had requested the Reverend Father-general to prevent my communicating with him. I know enough of that noble heart to be certain that he is the victim

of some odious plot to me unknown. But, however that may be, the end is irrevocable. Madame la Duchesse d'Argaiolo, now Duchesse de Rhétoré, seems to me to have pushed her cruelty to extremes. When Albert rushed to Belgirate from Besançon she was no longer there, and had left orders which led him to suppose (falsely) that she had gone to London. From London he returned to Italy, and searched for her in many places, — Rome, Naples, Florence. When at last he was able to meet her face to face, it was in Florence at the moment when her marriage was being celebrated. He fainted in the church, and has never been able, even when he lay for a time at death's door, to obtain any explanation from the duchess, who must have had some unknown cause of rancor in her heart.

“For seven months he travelled from place to place on the traces of a cruel woman who made it her pleasure to evade him. He knew neither where nor how to reach her. I saw our poor friend as he passed through Paris after the catastrophe, and if you had seen him as I did, you would have felt with me that no word could be said to him about the duchess without bringing on a crisis in which his reason might give way. If he had known the crime imputed to him he might possibly have found means of justification; but ignorant as he was, what could he do?

Albert is dead — dead to the world. He craved for rest; let us hope that prayer and the deep silence into which he has flung himself may bring him happiness under another form. If you have really known him, monsieur, you will surely pity him, and also pity me his friend.

“Accept, etc., etc.”

As soon as Monsieur de Grancey had read this letter he wrote to the Father-general of the Chartreux, and received with his reply the following letter from Albert Savarus: —

“LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE, November, 1836.

“I recognize your tender soul, my dear, beloved vicar-general, and your ever-youthful heart in all that the Reverend Father-general of our Order has communicated to me. You have indeed understood the only wish that remained in the inmost folds of my heart about the things of this world, — namely, to bring her who has so ill-treated me to do me justice. But in leaving me free to accept your offer of vindication, the Father-general was testing the strength of my vocation. He has had the extreme goodness to tell me this after I had decided to refuse your offer and to maintain an absolute silence as to my conduct. Had I yielded to the temptation of vindicating the man of the world, the seeker for religion would have been rejected by this monastery.

“Is not this enough to show you that I can never

take part in life again? Consequently, the forgiveness which you ask of me for the author of so much woe is fully given, and without one thought of bitterness. I will pray God to pardon that young lady as I pardon her, just as I pray Him to grant a happy life to Madame de Rhétoré. Ah! what matters it whether it be death, or the wilful hand of a young girl frantic to be loved, or the blow of what men call chance — must we not obey God? There are souls which sorrow changes into a vast desert where the Divine voice echoes. Too late have I come to understand the relation between this life and the life before us — my strength is gone. I could not serve in the ranks of the Church militant, and I cast the remnants of my earthly existence, which is well-nigh over, at the foot of the altar. This is the last letter that I shall write. You alone — you who love me and whom I truly love — could have made me break the rule of forgetting all which I imposed upon my soul when I entered the metropolis of Saint-Bruno; but your name is ever in the prayers of

“ALBERT.”

“Perhaps it is all for the best,” thought the old man.

After communicating this letter to Rosalie, who kissed the passage containing her pardon, the abbé said to her: “Now that he is utterly lost to you, will

you not consent to be reconciled to your mother, and marry the Comte de Soulas?"

"Albert must order me to do so," she replied.

"You see for yourself it is impossible to consult him. Besides, the Father-general would not allow it."

"Could I go and see him?"

"No one can see a Chartreux monk; neither can any woman, except the Queen of France, enter La Grande Chartreuse," said the abbé. "Nothing therefore hinders you from marrying the Comte de Soulas."

"I do not wish to cause my mother's unhappiness," said Rosalie.

"Satan!" cried the vicar-general.

Towards the end of the winter the kind old abbé died, and his friendly offices no longer interposed between the iron natures of Madame de Watteville and her daughter. The event he had predicted took place; the baroness married Monsieur de Soulas in August, 1837, in Paris where she had gone to live by Rosalie's advice, who became very kind to her mother about this time. Madame de Watteville was misled into thinking it was real kindness on her daughter's part, but it was prompted solely by a desire to go to Paris and wreak an atrocious vengeance; Rosalie was determined to avenge Albert by torturing her rival.

Mademoiselle de Watteville was now of age, and



her mother, in order to settle their accounts, had relinquished her rights in Les Rouxey, and the daughter had given the mother a release of all other claims on her father's property. She had also encouraged her mother in marrying the Comte de Soulas and making a settlement upon him.

“ Let us each have our liberty,” she said.

Madame de Soulas, though somewhat uneasy as to her daughter's intentions, was touched by this apparent generosity, and she made Rosalie a present of six thousand francs a year from the Public Funds, to relieve her conscience. As Madame de Soulas had an immense property in land, and was quite incapable of selling it in order to deprive Rosalie of her legal share, Mademoiselle de Watteville was still an heiress, and she soon took, with her mother, the tone and habits of Paris, where they lived in the great world.

Towards the end of the month of February, 1838, Rosalie, to whom a number of young men were paying assiduous court, was at length able to execute the purpose which had brought her to Paris. Her desire to meet the Duchesse de Rhétoré, to see that remarkable woman and drive her to eternal remorse was gratified. She had taken pains to make herself elegant and coquettish in all her surroundings in order to approach the duchess on a footing of equality. Their first meeting took place at a ball given annually, since 1830, in

aid of the pensioners of the former Civil list. A young man, instigated by Rosalie, pointed her out to the duchess with the remark: "There is a remarkable young girl—very strong-minded. She caused a man of great talent, Monsieur Albert de Savarus, to bury himself in the Chartreuse monastery at Grenoble. She is Mademoiselle de Watteville, an heiress from Besançon."

The duchess turned pale. A look was exchanged between herself and Rosalie, — one of those looks which, from woman to woman, are more deadly than the pistol-shots of a duel. Francesca Soderini, who had suspected Albert's innocence, left the ballroom at once, her informant being little aware of the terrible wound he had inflicted on the stately Duchesse de Rhétoré.

"If you wish to know more about Albert come to the ball at the Opera-house on Tuesday next, holding a marigold in your hand."

This anonymous letter, sent by Rosalie to the duchess, brought the unfortunate Francesca to the ball, where Mademoiselle de Watteville placed in her hands all Albert's letters, the one written by Léopold Hannequin to the vicar-general, and even the one in which she had written her own confession to the abbé.

"I will not be the only one to suffer," she said to her rival; "you have been as cruel to him as I."

After enjoying for an instant the stupefaction visible on the beautiful face of the duchess, Rosalie left the room and never again reappeared in society. She returned to Besançon with her mother.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, living alone on her estate of Les Rouxey, riding on horseback, hunting, refusing two or three suitors a year, and going occasionally to Besançon, being at one time chiefly occupied in making her property productive, was considered an extremely original person, and one of the celebrities of the East.

Madame de Soulas has two children, a boy and a girl ; she has grown younger, but young Monsieur de Soulas is considerably older.

“My fortune has cost me dear,” he said to his friend de Chavoncourt. “If you want to know what a *dévoté* is you must marry her.”

Mademoiselle de Watteville does extraordinary things. People say of her, “She is a trifle cracked.” She goes, or rather did go, every year to look at the walls of La Grande Chartreuse. Perhaps she was thinking of imitating her great uncle and scaling the walls of that convent as he scaled those of his monastery when he escaped into freedom.

In 1841 she left Besançon with the intention, people said, of being married ; but no one really knows the object of her journey, from which she was brought

back in a state which prevented her, forever after, from appearing in society. By one of those apparent chances to which the old Abbé de Grancey had alluded, she was on the Loire in a steamboat when the boiler burst. Mademoiselle de Watteville was so cruelly injured that she lost her right arm and her left leg ; her face was so scarred that no trace of comeliness remained, and her health so broken by the shock that she seldom passes a day without suffering. Since then, she has never left the Hermitage at Les Rouxey, where she leads a life which is wholly devoted to her religious duties.

P A Z.

(LA FAUSSE MAÎTRESSE.)

P A Z.



DEDICATED TO THE COMTESSE CLARA MAFFEI.

I.

IN September, 1835, one of the richest heiresses of the faubourg Saint-Germain, Mademoiselle du Rouvre, the only daughter of the Marquis du Rouvre, married Comte Adam Mitgislav Laginski, a young Polish exile.

We ask permission to write these Polish names as they are pronounced, to spare our readers the aspect of the fortifications of consonants by which the Slave language protects its vowels, — probably not to lose them, considering how few there are.

The Marquis du Rouvre had squandered nearly the whole of a princely fortune, which he obtained originally through his marriage with a Demoiselle de Ronquerolles. Therefore, on her mother's side Clementine du Rouvre had the Marquis de Ronquerolles for uncle, and Madame de Sérizy for aunt. On her father's side she had another

uncle in the eccentric person of the Chevalier du Rouvre, a younger son of the house, an old bachelor who had become very rich by speculating in lands and houses. The Marquis de Ronquerolles had the misfortune to lose both his children at the time of the cholera, and the only son of Madame de Sérizy, a young soldier of great promise, perished in Africa in the affair of the Makta. In these days rich families stand between the danger of impoverishing their children if they have too many, or of extinguishing their names if they have too few, — a singular result of the Code which Napoleon never thought of. By a curious turn of fortune Clémentine became, in spite of her father having squandered his substance on Florine (one of the most charming actresses in Paris), a great heiress. The Marquis de Ronquerolles, a clever diplomatist under the new dynasty, his sister, Madame de Sérizy, and the Chevalier du Rouvre agreed, in order to save their fortunes from the dissipations of the marquis, to settle them on their niece, to whom, moreover, they each pledged themselves to pay ten thousand francs a year from the day of her marriage.

It is quite unnecessary to say that the Polish count, though an exile, was no expense to the French government. Comte Adam Laginski belonged to one of the oldest and most illustrious families in Poland, which was allied to many of the princely houses of Ger-

many, — Sapiéha, Radziwill, Mniszech, Rzewuski, Czartoryski, Leczinski, Lubomirski, and all the other great Sarmatian *skis*. But heraldic knowledge is not the most distinguishing feature of the French nation under Louis-Philippe, and Polish nobility was no great recommendation to the bourgeoisie who were lording it in those days. Besides, when Adam first made his appearance, in 1833, on the boulevard des Italiens, at Frascati, and at the Jockey-Club, he was leading the life of a young man who, having lost his political prospects, was taking his pleasure in Parisian dissipation. At first he was thought to be a student.

The Polish nationality had at this period fallen as low in French estimation, thanks to a shameful governmental reaction, as the republicans had sought to raise it. The singular struggle of the Movement against Resistance (two words which will be inexplicable thirty years hence) made sport of what ought to have been truly respected, — the name of a conquered nation to whom the French had offered hospitality, for whom fêtes had been given (with songs and dances by subscription), above all, a nation which in the Napoleonic struggle between France and Europe had given us six thousand men, and what men!

Do not infer from this that either side is taken here; either that of the Emperor Nicholas against Poland, or that of Poland against the Emperor. It would be

a foolish thing to slip political discussions into tales that are intended to amuse or interest. Besides, Russia and Poland were both right, — one to wish the unity of its empire, the other to desire its liberty. Let us say in passing that Poland might have conquered Russia by the influence of her morals instead of fighting her with weapons; she should have imitated China which, in the end, Chinesed the Tartars, and will, it is to be hoped, Chinese the English. Poland ought to have Polonized Russia. Poniatowski tried to do so in the least favorable portion of the empire; but as a king he was little understood, — because, possibly, he did not fully understand himself.

But how could the Parisians avoid disliking an unfortunate people who were the cause of that shameful falsehood enacted during the famous review at which all Paris declared its will to succor Poland? The Poles were held up to them as the allies of the republican party, and they never once remembered that Poland was a republic of aristocrats. From that day forth the bourgeoisie treated with base contempt the exiles of the nation it had worshipped a few days earlier. The wind of a riot is always enough to veer the Parisians from north to south under any régime. It is necessary to remember these sudden fluctuations of feeling in order to understand why it was that in 1835 the word “Pole” conveyed a derisive meaning to a

people who consider themselves the wittiest and most courteous nation on earth, and their city of Paris the focus of enlightenment, with the sceptre of arts and literature within its grasp.

There, are, alas! two sorts of Polish exiles, — the republican Poles, sons of Lelewel, and the noble Poles, at the head of whom is Prince Adam Czartoryski. The two classes are like fire and water; but why complain of that? Such divisions are always to be found among exiles, no matter of what nation they may be, or in what countries they take refuge. They carry their countries and their hatreds with them. Two French priests, who had emigrated to Brussels during the Revolution, showed the utmost horror of each other, and when one of them was asked why, he replied with a glance at his companion in misery: “Why? because he’s a Jansenist!” Dante would gladly have stabbed a Guelf had he met him in exile. This explains the virulent attacks of the French against the venerable Prince Adam Czartoryski, and the dislike shown to the better class of Polish exiles by the shop-keeping Cæsars and the licensed Alexanders of Paris.

In 1834, therefore, Adam Mitgislaz Laginski was something of a butt for Parisian pleasantry.

“He is rather nice, though he is a Pole,” said Rastignac.

“All these Poles pretend to be great lords,” said

Maxime de Trailles, "but this one does pay his gambling debts, and I begin to think he must have property."

Without wishing to offend these banished men, it may be allowable to remark that the light-hearted, careless inconsistency of the Sarmatian character does justify in some degree the satire of the Parisians, who, by the bye, would behave in like circumstances exactly as the Poles do. The French aristocracy, so nobly succored during the Revolution by the Polish lords, certainly did not return the kindness in 1832. Let us have the melancholy courage to admit this, and to say that the faubourg Saint-Germain is still the debtor of Poland.

Was Comte Adam rich, or was he poor, or was he an adventurer? This problem was long unsolved. The diplomatic salons, faithful to instructions, imitated the silence of the Emperor Nicholas, who held that all Polish exiles were virtually dead and buried. The court of the Tuileries, and all who took their cue from it, gave striking proof of the political quality which was then dignified by the name of sagacity. They turned their backs on a Russian prince with whom they had all been on intimate terms during the Emigration, merely because it was said that the Emperor Nicholas gave him the cold shoulder. Between the caution of the court and the prudence of the

diplomates, the Polish exiles of distinction lived in Paris in the Biblical solitude of *super flumina Babylonis*, or else they haunted a few salons which were the neutral ground of all opinions. In a city of pleasure, like Paris, where amusements abound on all sides, the heedless gayety of a Pole finds twice as many encouragements as it needs to a life of dissipation.

It must be said, however, that Adam had two points against him, — his appearance, and his mental equipment. There are two species of Pole, as there are two species of Englishwoman. When an Englishwoman is not very handsome she is horribly ugly. Comte Adam belonged in the second category of human beings. His small face, rather sharp in expression, looked as if it had been pressed in a vise. His short nose, and fair hair, and reddish beard and moustache made him look all the more like a goat because he was small and thin, and his tarnished yellow eyes caught you with that oblique look which Virgil celebrates. How came he, in spite of such obvious disadvantages, to possess really exquisite manners and a distinguished air? The problem is solved partly by the care and elegance of his dress, and partly by the training given him by his mother, a Radziwill. His courage amounted to daring, but his mind was not more than was needed for the ephemeral talk and pleasantry of Parisian conversation. And yet it would have been difficult to find among the young

men of fashion in Paris a single one who was his superior. Young men talk a great deal too much in these days of horses, money, taxes, deputies; French *conversation* is no longer what it was. Brilliancy of mind needs leisure and certain social inequalities to bring it out. There is, probably, more real conversation in Vienna or St. Petersburg than in Paris. Equals do not need to employ delicacy or shrewdness in speech; they blurt out things as they are. Consequently the dandies of Paris did not discover the great *seigneur* in the rather heedless young fellow who, in their talks, would flit from one subject to another, all the more intent upon amusement because he had just escaped from a great peril, and, finding himself in a city where his family was unknown, felt at liberty to lead a loose life without the risk of disgracing his name.

But one fine day in 1834 Adam suddenly bought a house in the rue de la Pépinière. Six months later his style of living was second to none in Paris. About the time when he thus began to take himself seriously he had seen Clémentine du Rouvre at the Opera and had fallen in love with her. A year later the marriage took place. The salon of Madame d'Espard was the first to sound his praises. Mothers of daughters then learned too late that as far back as the year 900 the family of the Laginski was among the most illustrious of the North. By an act of prudence which

was very unPolish, the mother of the young count had mortgaged her entire property on the breaking out of the insurrection for an immense sum lent by two Jewish bankers in Paris. Comte Adam was now in possession of eighty thousand francs a year. When this was discovered society ceased to be surprised at the imprudence which had been laid to the charge of Madame de Sérizy, the Marquis de Ronquerolles, and the Chevalier du Rouvre in yielding to the foolish passion of their niece. People jumped, as usual, from one extreme of judgment to the other.

During the winter of 1836 Comte Adam was the fashion, and Clémentine Laginska one of the queens of Paris. Madame Laginska is now a member of that charming circle of young women represented by Mesdames de Lestorade, de Portenduère, Marie de Vandenesse, du Guénic, and de Maufrigneuse, the flowers of our present Paris, who live at such immeasurable distance from the parvenus, the vulgarians, and the speculators of the new régime.

This preamble is necessary to show the sphere in which was done one of those noble actions, less rare than the calumniators of our time admit, — actions which, like pearls, the fruit of pain and suffering, are hidden within rough shells, lost in the gulf, the sea, the tossing waves of what we call society, the century, Paris, London, St. Petersburg, — or what you will.

If the axiom that architecture is the expression of manners and morals was ever proved, it was certainly after the insurrection of 1830, during the present reign of the house of Orléans. As all the old fortunes are diminishing in France, the majestic mansions of our ancestors are constantly being demolished and replaced by species of phalansteries, in which the peers of July occupy the third floor above some newly enriched empires on the lower floors. A mixture of styles is confusedly employed. As there is no longer a real court or nobility to give the tone, there is no harmony in the production of art. Never, on the other hand, has architecture discovered so many economical ways of imitating the real and the solid, or displayed more resources, more talent, in distributing them. Propose to an architect to build upon the garden at the back of an old mansion, and he will run you up a little Louvre overloaded with ornament. He will manage to get in a courtyard, stables, and if you care for it, a garden. Inside the house he will accumulate a quantity of little rooms and passages. He is so clever in deceiving the eye that you think you will have plenty of space; but it is only a nest of small rooms, after all, in which a ducal family has to turn itself about in the space that its own bakehouse formerly occupied.

The hôtel of the Comtesse Laginska, rue de la Pepinière, is one of these creations, and stands be-

tween court and garden. On the right, in the court, are the kitchens and offices; to the left the coach-house and stables. The porter's lodge is between two charming portes-cochères. The chief luxury of the house is a delightful greenhouse contrived at the end of a boudoir on the ground-floor which opens upon an admirable suite of reception rooms. An English philanthropist had built this architectural bijou, designed the garden, added the greenhouse, polished the doors, bricked the courtyard, painted the window-frames green, and realized, in short, a dream which resembled (proportions excepted) George the Fourth's Pavilion at Brighton. The inventive and industrious Parisian workman had moulded the doors and window-frames; the ceilings were imitated from the middle-ages or those of a Venetian palace; marble veneering abounded on the outer walls. Steinbock and François Souchet had designed the mantel-pieces and the panels above the doors; Schinner had painted the ceilings in his masterly manner. The beauties of the staircase, white as a woman's arm, defied those of the hôtel Rothschild. On account of the riots and the unsettled times, the cost of this folly was only about eleven hundred thousand francs, — to an Englishman a mere nothing. All this luxury, called princely by persons who do not know what real princes are, was built in the garden of the house of a purveyor made a

Crœsus by the Revolution, who had escaped to Brussels and died there after going into bankruptcy. The Englishman died in Paris, of Paris; for to many persons Paris is a disease, — sometimes several diseases. His widow, a Methodist, had a horror of the little nabob establishment, and ordered it to be sold. Comte Adam bought it at a bargain; and how he came to do so shall presently be made known, for bargains were not at all in his line as a *grand seigneur*.

Behind the house lay the verdant velvet of an English lawn shaded at the lower end by a clump of exotic trees, in the midst of which stood a Chinese pagoda with soundless belfries and motionless golden eggs. The greenhouse concealed the garden wall on the northern side, the opposite wall was covered with climbing plants trained upon poles painted green and connected with crossway trellises. This lawn, this world of flowers, the gravelled paths, the simulated forest, the verdant palisades, were contained within the space of five and twenty square rods, which are worth to-day four hundred thousand francs, — the value of an actual forest. Here, in this solitude in the middle of Paris, the birds sang, thrushes, nightingales, warblers, bulfinches, and sparrows. The greenhouse was like an immense jardinière, filling the air with perfume in winter as in summer. The means by which its

atmosphere was made to order, torrid as in China or temperate as in Italy, were cleverly concealed. Pipes in which hot water circulated, or steam, were either hidden under ground or festooned with plants overhead. The boudoir was a large room. The miracle of the modern Parisian fairy named Architecture is to get all these many and great things out of a limited bit of ground.

The boudoir of the young countess was arranged to suit the taste of the artist to whom Comte Adam entrusted the decoration of the house. It is too full of pretty nothings to be a place for repose; one scarce knows where to sit down among carved Chinese work-tables with their myriads of fantastic figures inlaid in ivory, cups of yellow topaz mounted on filagree, mosaics which inspire theft, Dutch pictures in the style which Schinner has adopted, angels such as Steinbock conceived but often could not execute, statuettes modelled by genius pursued by creditors (the real explanation of the Arabian myth), superb sketches by our best artists, lids of chests made into panels alternating with fluted draperies of Indian silk, portières hanging from rods of old oak in tapestried masses on which the figures of some hunting scene are swarming, pieces of furniture worthy to have belonged to Madame de Pompadour, Persian rugs, et cetera. For a last graceful touch, all these elegant things were subdued by the half-light

which filtered through embroidered curtains and added to their charm. On a table between the windows, among various curiosities, lay a whip, the handle designed by Mademoiselle de Fauveau, which proved that the countess rode on horseback.

Such is a lady's boudoir in 1837, — an exhibition of the contents of many shops, which amuse the eye, as if ennui were the one thing to be dreaded by the social world of the liveliest and most stirring capital in Europe. Why is there nothing of an inner life? nothing which leads to revery, nothing reposeful? Why indeed? Because no one in our day is sure of the future; we are living our lives like prodigal annuitants.

One morning Clémentine appeared to be thinking of something. She was lying at full length on one of those marvellous couches from which it is almost impossible to rise, the upholsterer having invented them for lovers of the *far niente* and its attendant joys of laziness to sink into. The doors of the greenhouse were open, letting the odors of vegetation and the perfume of the tropics pervade the room. The young wife was looking at her husband who was smoking a narghile, the only form of pipe she would have suffered in that room. The portières, held back by cords, gave a vista through two elegant salons, one white and gold, comparable only to that of the hôtel Forbin-Janson, the other in the style of the Renais-

sance. The dining-room, which had no rival in Paris except that of the Baron de Nucingen, was at the end of a short gallery decorated in the manner of the middle-ages. This gallery opened on the side of the courtyard upon a large antechamber, through which could be seen the beauties of the staircase.

The count and countess had just finished breakfast; the sky was a sheet of azure without a cloud, April was nearly over. They had been married two years, and Clémentine had just discovered for the first time that there was something resembling a secret or a mystery in her household. The Pole, let us say it to his honor, is usually helpless before a woman; he is so full of tenderness for her that in Poland he becomes her inferior, though Polish women make admirable wives. Now a Pole is still more easily vanquished by a Parisian woman. Consequently Comte Adam, pressed by questions, did not even attempt the innocent roguery of selling the suspected secret. It is always wise with a woman to get some good out of a mystery; she will like you the better for it, as a swindler respects an honest man the more when he finds he cannot swindle him. Brave in heart but not in speech, Comte Adam merely stipulated that he should not be compelled to answer till he had finished his narghile.

“If any difficulty occurred when we were travelling,”

said Clémentine, "you always dismissed it by saying, 'Paz will settle that.' You never wrote to any one but Paz. When we returned here everybody kept saying, 'the captain, the captain.' If I want the carriage — 'the captain.' Is there a bill to pay — 'the captain.' If my horse is not properly bitted, they must speak to Captain Paz. In short, it is like a game of dominoes — Paz is everywhere. I hear of nothing but Paz, but I never see Paz. Who and what is Paz? Why don't you bring forth your Paz?"

"Is n't everything going on right?" asked the count, taking the *bocchettino* of his narghile from his lips.

"Everything is going on so right that other people with an income of two hundred thousand francs would ruin themselves by going at our pace, and we have only one hundred and ten thousand."

So saying she pulled the bell-cord (an exquisite bit of needlework). A footman entered, dressed like a minister.

"Tell Captain Paz that I wish to see him."

"If you think you are going to find out anything that way —" said Comte Adam, laughing.

It is well to mention that Adam and Clémentine, married in December, 1835, had gone soon after the wedding to Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, where they spent the greater part of two years. Returning to Paris in November, 1837, the countess entered so-

ciety for the first time as a married woman during the winter which had just ended, and she then became aware of the existence, half-suppressed and wholly dumb but very useful, of a species of factotum who was personally invisible, named Paz, — spelt “Pac,” but pronounced as written here.

“Monsieur le capitaine Paz begs Madame la comtesse to excuse him,” said the footman, returning. “He is at the stables ; as soon as he has changed his dress Comte Paz will present himself to Madame.”

“What was he doing at the stables?”

“He was showing them how to groom Madame’s horse,” said the man. “He was not pleased with the way Constantin did it.”

The countess looked at the footman. He was perfectly serious and did not add to his words the sort of smile by which servants usually comment on the actions of a superior who seems to them to derogate from his position.

“Ah! he was grooming Cora.”

“Madame la comtesse intends to ride out this morning?” said the footman, leaving the room without further answer.

“Is Paz a Pole?” asked Clémentine, turning to her husband, who nodded by way of affirmation.

Madame Laginska was silent, examining Adam. With her feet extended upon a cushion and her head

poised like that of a bird on the edge of its nest listening to the noises in a grove, she would have seemed enchanting even to a *blasé* man. Fair and slender, and wearing her hair in curls, she was not unlike those semi-romantic pictures in the Keepsakes, especially when dressed, as she was this morning, in a breakfast gown of Persian silk, the folds of which could not disguise the beauty of her figure or the slimness of her waist. The silk with its brilliant colors being crossed upon the bosom showed the spring of the neck, — its whiteness contrasting delightfully against the tones of a guipure lace which lay upon her shoulders. Her eyes and their long black lashes added at this moment to the expression of curiosity which puckered her pretty mouth. On the forehead, which was well modelled, an observer would have noticed a roundness characteristic of the true Parisian woman, — self-willed, merry, well-informed, but inaccessible to vulgar seductions. Her hands, which were almost transparent, were hanging down at the end of each arm of her chair; the tapering fingers, slightly turned up at their points, showed nails like almonds, which caught the light. Adam smiled at his wife's impatience, and looked at her with a glance which two years of married life had not yet chilled. Already the little countess had made herself mistress of the situation, for she scarcely paid attention to her hus-

band's admiration. In fact, in the look which she occasionally cast at him, there seemed to be the consciousness of a Frenchwoman's ascendancy over the puny, volatile, and red-haired Pole.

"Here comes Paz," said the count, hearing a step which echoed through the gallery.

The countess beheld a tall and handsome man, well-made, and bearing on his face the signs of pain which come of inward strength and secret endurance of sorrow. He wore one of those tight, frogged overcoats which were then called "*polonaise*." Thick, black hair, rather unkempt, covered his square head, and Clémentine noticed his broad forehead shining like a block of white marble, for Paz held his visored cap in his hand. The hand itself was like that of the Infant Hercules. Robust health flourished on his face, which was divided by a large Roman nose and reminded Clémentine of some handsome Transteverino. A black silk cravat added to the martial appearance of this six-foot mystery, with eyes of jet and Italian fervor. The amplitude of his pleated trousers, which allowed only the tips of his boots to be seen, revealed his faithfulness to the fashions of his own land. There was something really burlesque to a romantic woman in the striking contrast no one could fail to remark between the captain and the count, the little Pole with his pinched face and the stalwart soldier.

“Good morning, Adam,” he said familiarly. Then he bowed courteously as he asked Clémentine what he could do for her.

“You are Laginski’s friend !” exclaimed the countess.

“For life and death,” answered Paz, to whom the count threw a smile of affection as he drew a last puff from his perfumed pipe.

“Then why don’t you take your meals with us? why did you not accompany us to Italy and Switzerland? why do you hide yourself in such a way that I am unable to thank you for the constant services that you do for us?” said the countess, with much vivacity of manner but no feeling.

In fact, she thought she perceived in Paz a sort of voluntary servitude. Such an idea carried with it in her mind a certain contempt for a social amphibian, a being half-secretary, half-bailiff, and yet neither the one nor the other, a poor relation, an embarrassing friend.

“Because, countess,” he answered with perfect ease of manner, “there are no thanks due. I am Adam’s friend, and it gives me pleasure to take care of his interests.”

“And you remain standing for your pleasure, too,” remarked Comte Adam.

Paz sat down on a chair near the door.

“I remember seeing you about the time I was

married, and afterwards in the courtyard," said Clémentine. "But why do you put yourself in a position of inferiority, — you, Adam's friend?"

"I am perfectly indifferent to the opinion of the Parisians," he replied. "I live for myself, or, if you like, for you two."

"But the opinion of the world as to a friend of my husband is not indifferent to me —"

"Ah, madame, the world will be satisfied if you tell them I am 'an original.'"

After a moment's silence he added, "Are you going out to-day?"

"Will you come with us to the Bois?"

"Certainly."

So saying, Paz bowed and withdrew.

"What a good soul he is!" said Adam. "He has all the simplicity of a child."

"Now tell me all about your relations with him," said Clémentine.

"Paz, my dear," said Laginski, "belongs to a noble family as old and illustrious as our own. One of the Pazzi of Florence, at the time of their disasters, fled to Poland, where he settled with some of his property and founded the Paz family, to which the title of count was granted. This family, which distinguished itself greatly in the glorious days of our royal republic, became rich. The graft from the tree that was felled

in Italy flourished so vigorously in Poland that there are several branches of the family still there. I need not tell you that some are rich and some are poor. Our Paz is the scion of a poor branch. He was an orphan, without other fortune than his sword, when he served in the regiment of the Grand Duke Constantine at the time of our revolution. Joining the Polish cause, he fought like a Pole, like a patriot, like a man who has nothing, — three good reasons for fighting well. In his last affair, thinking he was followed by his men, he dashed upon a Russian battery and was taken prisoner. I was there. His brave act roused me. ‘Let us go and get him!’ I said to my troop, and we charged the battery like a lot of foragers. I got Paz — I was the seventh man; we started twenty and came back eight, counting Paz. After Warsaw was sold we were forced to escape those Russians. By a curious chance, Paz and I happened to come together again, at the same hour and the same place, on the other side of the Vistula. I saw the poor captain arrested by some Prussians, who made themselves the blood-hounds of the Russians. When we have fished a man out of the Styx we cling to him. This new danger for poor Paz made me so unhappy that I let myself be taken too, thinking I could help him. Two men can get away where one will perish. Thanks to my name and some family

connections in Prussia, the authorities shut their eyes to my escape. I got my dear captain through as a man of no consequence, a family servant, and we reached Dantzic. There we got on board a Dutch vessel and went to London. It took us two months to get there. My mother was ill in England, and expecting me. Paz and I took care of her till her death, which the Polish troubles hastened. Then we left London and came to France. Men who go through such adversities become like brothers. When I reached Paris, at twenty-two years of age, and found I had an income of over sixty thousand francs a year, without counting the proceeds of the diamonds and the pictures sold by my mother, I wanted to secure the future of my dear Paz before I launched into dissipation. I had often noticed the sadness in his eyes—sometimes tears were in them. I had had good reason to understand his soul, which is noble, grand, and generous to the core. I thought he might not like to be bound by benefits to a friend who was six years younger than himself, unless he could repay them. I was careless and frivolous, just as a young fellow is, and I knew I was certain to ruin myself at play, or get inveigled by some woman, and Paz and I might then be parted; and though I had every intention of always looking out for him, I knew I might sometime or other forget to provide for him.

In short, my dear angel, I wanted to spare him the pain and mortification of having to ask me for money, or of having to hunt me up if he got into distress. So, one morning, after breakfast, when we were sitting with our feet on the andirons smoking pipes, I produced, — with the utmost precaution, for I saw him look at me uneasily, — a certificate of the Funds payable to bearer for a certain sum of money a year.”

Clémentine jumped up and went and seated herself on Adam’s knee, put her arms round his neck, and kissed him. “Dear treasure!” she said, “how handsome he is! Well, what did Paz do?”

“Thaddeus turned pale,” said the count, “but he did n’t say a word.”

“Oh! his name is Thaddeus, is it?”

“Yes; Thaddeus folded the paper and gave it back to me, and then he said: ‘I thought, Adam, that we were one for life or death, and that we should never part. Do you want to be rid of me?’ ‘Oh!’ I said, ‘if you take it that way, Thaddeus, don’t let us say another word about it. If I ruin myself you shall be ruined too.’ ‘You have n’t fortune enough to live as a Laginski should,’ he said, ‘and you need a friend who will take care of your affairs, and be a father and a brother and a trusty confidant.’ My dear child, as Paz said that he had in his look and voice, calm as they were, a maternal emotion, and also the gratitude

of an Arab, the fidelity of a dog, the friendship of a savage, — not displayed but ever ready. Faith! I seized him, as we Poles do, with a hand on each shoulder, and I kissed him on the lips. ‘For life and death, then! all that I have is yours — do what you will with it.’ It was he who found me this house and bought it for next to nothing. He sold my Funds high and bought in low, and we have paid for this barrack with the profits. He knows horses, and he manages to buy and sell at such advantage that my stable really costs very little; and yet I have the finest horses and the most elegant equipages in all Paris. Our servants, brave Polish soldiers chosen by him, would go through fire and water for us. I seem, as you say, to be ruining myself; and yet Paz keeps the house with such method and economy that he has even repaired some of my foolish losses at play, — the thoughtless folly of a young man. My dear, Thaddeus is as shrewd as two Genoese, as eager for gain as a Polish Jew, and provident as a good housekeeper. I never could force him to live as I did when I was a bachelor. Sometimes I had to use a sort of friendly coercion to make him go to the theatre with me when I was alone, or to the jovial little dinners I used to give at a tavern. He does n’t like social life.”

“What does he like, then?” asked Clémentine.

“Poland; he loves Poland and pines for it. His

only spendings are sums he gives, more in my name than in his own, to some of our poor brother-exiles."

"Well, I shall love him, the fine fellow!" said the countess, "he looks to me as simple-hearted as he is grand."

"All these pretty things you have about you," continued Adam, who praised his friend in the noblest security, "he picked up; he bought them at auction, or as bargains from the dealers. Oh! he's keener than they are themselves. If you see him rubbing his hands in the courtyard, you may be sure he has traded away one good horse for a better. He lives for me; his happiness is to see me elegant, in a perfectly appointed equipage. The duties he takes upon himself are all accomplished without fuss or emphasis. One evening I lost twenty thousand francs at whist. 'What will Paz say?' thought I as I walked home. Paz paid them to me, not without a sigh; but he never reproached me, even by a look. But that sigh of his restrained me more than the remonstrances of uncles, mothers, or wives could have done. 'Do you regret the money?' I said to him. 'Not for you or me, no,' he replied; 'but I was thinking that twenty poor Poles could have lived a year on that sum.' You must understand that the Pazzi are fully the equal of the Laginski, so I could n't regard my dear Paz as an inferior. I never went out or came in without going first

to Paz, as I would to my father. My fortune is his ; and Thaddeus knows that if danger threatened him I would fling myself into it and drag him out, as I have done before."

"And that is saying a good deal, my dear friend," said the countess. "Devotion is like a flash of lightning. Men devote themselves in battle, but they no longer have the heart for it in Paris."

"Well," replied Adam, "I am always ready, as in battle, to devote myself to Paz. Our two characters have kept their natural asperities and defects, but the mutual comprehension of our souls has tightened the bond already close between us. It is quite possible to save a man's life and kill him afterwards if we find him a bad fellow ; but Paz and I know *that* of each other which makes our friendship indissoluble. There's a constant exchange of happy thoughts and impressions between us ; and really, perhaps, such a friendship as ours is richer than love."

A pretty hand closed the count's mouth so promptly that the action was somewhat like a blow.

"Yes," he said, "friendship, my dear angel, knows nothing of bankrupt sentiments and collapsed joys. Love, after giving more than it has, ends by giving less than it receives."

"One side as well as the other," remarked Clémentine laughing.

“Yes,” continued Adam, “whereas friendship only increases. You need not pucker up your lips at that, for we are, you and I, as much friends as lovers; we have, at least I hope so, combined the two sentiments in our happy marriage.”

“I’ll explain to you what it is that has made you and Thaddeus such good friends,” said Clémentine. “The difference in the lives you lead comes from your tastes and from necessity; from your likings, not your positions. As far as one can judge from merely seeing a man once, and also from what you tell me, there are times when the subaltern might become the superior.”

“Oh, Paz is truly my superior,” said Adam, naïvely; “I have no advantage over him except mere luck.”

His wife kissed him for the generosity of those words.

“The extreme care with which he hides the grandeur of his feelings is one form of his superiority,” continued the count. “I said to him once: ‘You are a sly one; you have in your heart a vast domain within which you live and think.’ He has a right to the title of count; but in Paris he won’t be called anything but captain.”

“The fact is that the Florentine of the middle-ages has reappeared in our century,” said the countess. “Dante and Michael Angelo are in him.”

“That’s the very truth,” cried Adam. “He is a poet in soul.”

“So here I am, married to two Poles,” said the young countess, with a gesture worthy of some genius of the stage.

“Dear child!” said Adam, pressing her to him, “it would have made me very unhappy if my friend did not please you. We were both rather afraid of it, he and I, though he was delighted at my marriage. You will make him very happy if you tell him that you love him, — yes, as an old friend.”

“I’ll go and dress, the day is so fine; and we will all three ride together,” said Clémentine, ringing for her maid.

II.

PAZ was leading so subterranean a life that the fashionable world of Paris asked who he was when the Comtesse Laginska was seen in the Bois de Boulogne riding between her husband and a stranger. During the ride Clémentine insisted that Thaddeus should dine with them. This caprice of the sovereign lady compelled Paz to make an evening toilet. Clémentine dressed for the occasion with a certain coquetry, in a style that impressed even Adam himself when she entered the salon where the two friends awaited her.

“Comte Paz,” she said, “you must go with us to the Opera.”

This was said in the tone which, coming from a woman means: “If you refuse we shall quarrel.”

“Willingly, madame,” replied the captain. “But as I have not the fortune of a count, have the kindness to call me captain.”

“Very good, captain; give me your arm,” she said, — taking it and leading the way to the dining-room with the flattering familiarity which enchants all lovers.

The countess placed the captain beside her ; his behavior was that of a poor sub-lieutenant dining at his general's table. He let Clémentine talk, listened deferentially as to a superior, did not differ with her in anything, and waited to be questioned before he spoke at all. He seemed actually stupid to the countess, whose coquettish little ways missed their mark in presence of such frigid gravity and conventional respect. In vain Adam kept saying : " Do be lively, Thaddeus ; one would really suppose you were not at home. You must have made a wager to disconcert Clémentine." Thaddeus continued heavy and half asleep. When the servants left the room at the end of the dessert the captain explained that his habits were diametrically opposite to those of society, — he went to bed at eight o'clock and got up very early in the morning ; and he excused his dulness on the ground of being sleepy.

" My intention in taking you to the Opera was to amuse you, captain ; but do as you prefer," said Clémentine, rather piqued.

" I will go," said Paz.

" Duprez sings ' Guillaume Tell,' " remarked Adam. " But perhaps you would rather go to the *Variétés* ? "

The captain smiled and rang the bell. " Tell Constantin," he said to the footman, " to put the horses to the carriage instead of the coupé. We should be rather squeezed otherwise," he said to the count.

"A Frenchman would have forgotten that," remarked Clémentine, smiling.

"Ah! but we are Florentines transplanted to the North," answered Thaddeus with a refinement of accent and a look in his eyes which made his conduct at table seem assumed for the occasion. There was too evident a contrast between his involuntary self-revelation in this speech and his behavior during dinner. Clémentine examined the captain with a few of those covert glances which show a woman's surprise and also her capacity for observation.

It resulted from this little incident that silence reigned in the salon while the three took their coffee, a silence rather annoying to Adam, who was incapable of imagining the cause of it. Clémentine no longer tried to draw out Thaddeus. The captain, on the other hand, retreated within his military stiffness and came out of it no more, neither on the way to the Opera nor in the box, where he seemed to be asleep.

"You see, madame, that I am a very stupid man," he said during the dance in the last act of "Guillaume Tell." "Am I not right to keep, as the saying is, to my own specialty?"

"In truth, my dear captain, you are neither a talker nor a man of the world, but you are perhaps Polish."

"Therefore leave me to look after your pleasures, your property, your household — it is all I am good for."

“Tartufe! pooh!” cried Adam, laughing. “My dear, he is full of ardor; he is thoroughly educated; he can, if he chooses, hold his own in any salon. Clémentine, don’t believe his modesty.”

“Adieu, comtesse; I have obeyed your wishes so far; and now I will take the carriage and go home to bed and send it back for you.”

Clémentine bowed her head and let him go without replying.

“What a bear!” she said to the count. “You are a great deal nicer.”

Adam pressed her hand when no one was looking.

“Poor, dear Thaddeus,” he said, “he is trying to make himself disagreeable where most men would try to seem more amiable than I.”

“Oh!” she said, “I am not sure but what there is some *calculation* in his behavior; he would have taken in an ordinary woman.”

Half an hour later, when the chasseur, Boleslas, called out “Gate!” and the carriage was waiting for it to swing back, Clémentine said to her husband, “Where does the captain perch?”

“Why, there!” replied Adam, pointing to a floor above the porte-cochère which had one window looking on the street. “His apartments are over the coachhouse.”

“Who lives on the other side?” asked the countess.

“No one as yet,” said Adam; “I mean that apartment for our children and their instructors.”

“He did n’t go to bed,” said the countess, observing lights in Thaddeus’s rooms when the carriage had passed under the portico supported by columns copied from those of the Tuileries, which replaced a vulgar zinc awning painted in stripes like cloth.

The captain, in his dressing-gown with a pipe in his mouth, was watching Clémentine as she entered the vestibule. The day had been a hard one for him. And here is the reason why: A great and terrible emotion had taken possession of his heart on the day when Adam made him go to the Opera to see and give his opinion on Mademoiselle du Rouvre; and again when he saw her on the occasion of her marriage, and recognized in her the woman whom a man is forced to love exclusively. For this reason Paz strongly advised and promoted the long journey to Italy and elsewhere after the marriage. At peace so long as Clémentine was away, his trial was renewed on the return of the happy household. As he sat at his window on this memorable night, smoking his latakia in a pipe of wild-cherry wood six feet long, given to him by Adam, these are the thoughts that were passing through his mind: —

“I, and God, who will reward me for suffering in silence, alone know how I love her! But how shall I manage to have neither her love nor her dislike?”

And his thoughts travelled far on this strange theme.

It must not be supposed that Thaddeus was living without pleasure in the midst of his sufferings. The deceptions of this day, for instance, were a source of inward joy to him. Since the return of the count and countess he had daily felt ineffable satisfactions in knowing himself necessary to a household which, without his devotion to its interests, would infallibly have gone to ruin. What fortune can bear the strain of reckless prodigality? Clémentine, brought up by a spendthrift father, knew nothing of the management of a household which the women of the present day, however rich or noble they may be, are often compelled to undertake themselves. How few, in these days, keep a steward. Adam, on the other hand, son of one of the great Polish lords who let themselves be preyed on by the Jews, and are wholly incapable of managing even the wreck of their vast fortunes (for fortunes are vast in Poland), was not of a nature to check his own fancies or those of his wife. Left to himself he would probably have been ruined before his marriage. Paz had prevented him from gambling at the Bourse, and that says all.

Under these circumstances, Thaddeus, feeling that he loved Clémentine in spite of himself, had not the resource of leaving the house and travelling in other lands to forget his passion. Gratitude, the key-note

of his life, held him bound to that household where he alone could look after the affairs of the heedless owners. The long absence of Adam and Clémentine had given him peace. But the countess had returned more lovely than ever, enjoying the freedom which marriage brings to a Parisian woman, displaying the graces of a young wife and the nameless attraction she gains from the happiness, or the independence, bestowed upon her by a young man as trustful, as chivalric, and as much in love as Adam. To know that he was the pivot on which the splendor of the household depended, to see Clémentine when she got out of her carriage on returning from some fête, or got into it in the morning when she took her drive, to meet her on the boulevards in her pretty equipage, looking like a flower in a whorl of leaves, inspired poor Thaddeus with mysterious delights, which glowed in the depths of his heart but gave no signs upon his face.

How happened it that for five whole months the countess had never perceived the captain? Because he hid himself from her knowledge, and carefully concealed the pains he took to avoid her. Nothing so resembles the Divine love as hopeless human love. A man must have great depth of heart to devote himself in silence and obscurity to a woman. In such a heart is the worship of love for love's sake only — sublime avarice, sublime because ever generous and founded on

the mysterious existence of the principles of creation. *Effect* is nature, and nature is enchanting ; it belongs to man, to the poet, the painter, the lover. But *Cause*, to a few privileged souls and to certain mighty thinkers, is superior to nature. Cause is God. In the sphere of causes live the Newtons and all such thinkers as Laplace, Kepler, Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Buffon ; also the true poets and solitaries of the second Christian century, and the Saint Teresas of Spain, and such sublime ecstasies. All human sentiments bear analogy to these conditions whenever the mind abandons Effect for Cause. Thaddeus had reached this height, at which all things change their relative aspect. Filled with the joys unutterable of a creator he had attained in his love to all that genius has revealed to us of grandeur.

“ No,” he was thinking to himself as he watched the curling smoke of his pipe, “ she was not entirely deceived. She might break up my friendship with Adam if she took a dislike to me ; but if she coquetted with me to amuse herself, what would become of me ? ”

The conceit of this last supposition was so foreign to the modest nature and Teutonic timidity of the captain that he scolded himself for admitting it, and went to bed, resolved to await events before deciding on a course.

The next day Clémentine breakfasted very contentedly without Paz, and without even noticing his

disobedience to her orders. It happened to be her reception day, when the house was thrown open with a splendor that was semi-royal. She paid no attention to the absence of Comte Paz, on whom all the burden of these parade days fell.

“ Good ! ” thought he, as he heard the last carriages driving away at two in the morning ; “ it was only the caprice or the curiosity of a Parisian woman that made her want to see me.”

After that the captain went back to his ordinary habits and ways, which had been somewhat upset by this incident. Diverted by her Parisian occupations, Clémentine appeared to have forgotten Paz. It must not be thought an easy matter to reign a queen over fickle Paris. Does any one suppose that fortunes alone are risked in the great game ? The winters are to fashionable women what a campaign once was to the soldiers of the Empire. What works of art and genius are expended on a gown or a garland in which to make a sensation ! A fragile, delicate creature will wear her stiff and brilliant harness of flowers and diamonds, silk and steel, from nine at night till two and often three o'clock in the morning. She eats little, to attract remark to her slender waist ; she satisfies her hunger with debilitating tea, sugared cakes, ices which heat her, or slices of heavy pastry. The stomach is made to yield to the orders of coquetry. The awakening

comes too late. A fashionable woman's whole life is in contradiction to the laws of nature, and nature is pitiless. She has no sooner risen than she makes an elaborate morning toilet, and thinks of the one which she means to wear in the afternoon. The moment she is dressed she has to receive and make visits, and go to the Bois either on horseback or in a carriage. She must practise the art of smiling, and must keep her mind on the stretch to invent new compliments which shall seem neither common nor far-fetched. All women do not succeed in this. It is no surprise, therefore, to find a young woman who entered fashionable society fresh and healthy, faded and worn out at the end of three years. Six months spent in the country will hardly heal the wounds of the winter. We hear continually, in these days, of mysterious ailments, — gastritis, and so forth, — ills unknown to women when they busied themselves about their households. In the olden time women only appeared in the world at intervals ; now they are always on the scene. Clémentine found she had to struggle for her supremacy. She was cited, and that alone brought jealousies ; and the care and watchfulness exacted by this contest with her rivals left little time even to love her husband. Paz might well be forgotten. Nevertheless, in the month of May, as she drove home from the Bois, just before she left Paris for Ronquerolles, her uncle's estate in Burgundy, she

noticed Thaddeus, elegantly dressed, sauntering on one of the side-paths of the Champs-Élysées, in the seventh heaven of delight at seeing his beautiful countess in her elegant carriage with its spirited horses and sparkling liveries, — in short, his beloved family the admired of all.

“There’s the captain,” she said to her husband.

“He’s happy!” said Adam. “This is his delight. He knows there’s no equipage more elegant than ours, and he is rejoicing to think that some people envy it. Have you only just noticed him? I see him there nearly every day.”

“I wonder what he is thinking about now,” said Clémentine.

“He is thinking that this winter has cost a good deal, and that it is time we went to economize with your old uncle Ronquerolles,” replied Adam.

The countess stopped the carriage near Paz, and bade him take the seat beside her. Thaddeus grew as red as a cherry.

“I shall poison you,” he said; “I have been smoking.”

“Does n’t Adam poison me?” she said.

“Yes, but he is Adam,” returned the captain.

“And why can’t Thaddeus have the same privileges?” asked the countess, smiling.

That divine smile had a power which triumphed over the heroic resolutions of poor Paz; he looked at

Clémentine with all the fire of his soul in his eyes, though, even so, its flame was tempered by the angelic gratitude of the man whose life was based upon that virtue. The countess folded her arms in her shawl, lay back pensively on her cushions, ruffling the feathers of her pretty bonnet, and looked at the people who passed her. That flash of a great and hitherto resigned soul reached her sensibilities. What was Adam's merit in her eyes? It was natural enough to have courage and generosity. But Thaddeus — surely Thaddeus possessed, or seemed to possess, some great superiority over Adam. They were dangerous thoughts which took possession of the countess's mind as she again noticed the contrast of the fine presence that distinguished Thaddeus, and the puny frame which in Adam showed the degenerating effects of intermarriage among the Polish aristocratic families. The devil alone knew the thoughts that were in Clémentine's head, for she sat still, with thoughtful, dreamy eyes, and without saying a word until they reached home.

“You will dine with us; I shall be angry if you disobey me,” she said as the carriage turned in. “You are Thaddeus to me, as you are to Adam. I know your obligations to him, but I also know those we are under to you. Both generousities are natural — but you are generous every day and all day. My father dines here to-day, also my uncle Ronquerolles and my aunt Ma-

dame de Sérizy. Dress yourself therefore," she said, taking the hand he offered to assist her from the carriage.

Thaddeus went to his own room to dress with a joyful heart, though shaken by an inward dread. He went down at the last moment and behaved through dinner as he had done on the first occasion, that is, like a soldier fit only for his duties as steward. But this time Clémentine was not his dupe; his glance had enlightened her. The Marquis de Ronquerolles, one of the ablest diplomates after Talleyrand, who had served with de Marsay during his short ministry, had been informed by his niece of the real worth and character of Comte Paz, and knew how modestly he made himself the steward of his friend Laginski.

"And why is this the first time I have the pleasure of seeing Comte Paz?" asked the marquis.

"Because he is so shy and retiring," replied Clémentine with a look at Paz telling him to change his behavior.

Alas! that we should have to avow it, at the risk of rendering the captain less interesting, but Paz, though superior to his friend Adam, was not a man of parts. His apparent superiority was due to his misfortunes. In his lonely and poverty-stricken life in Warsaw he had read and taught himself a good deal; he had compared and meditated. But the gift of original thought

which makes a great man he did not possess, and it can never be acquired. Paz, great in heart only, approached in heart to the sublime; but in the sphere of sentiments, being more a man of action than of thought, he kept his thoughts to himself; and they only served therefore to eat his heart out. What, after all, is a thought unexpressed?

After Clémentine's little speech, the Marquis de Ronquerolles and his sister exchanged a singular glance, embracing their niece, Comte Adam, and Paz. It was one of those rapid scenes which take place only in France and Italy, — the two regions of the world (all courts excepted) where eyes can say everything. To communicate to the eye the full power of the soul, to give it the value of speech, and to infuse a poem or a drama into a glance, needs either the pressure of extreme servitude, or complete liberty. Adam, the Marquis du Rouvre, and Clémentine did not observe this luminous by-play of the old coquette and the old diplomatist, but Paz, the faithful watchdog, understood its meaning. It was, we must remark, an affair of two seconds; but to describe the tempest it roused in the captain's soul would take far too much space in this brief history.

“What!” he said to himself, “do the aunt and uncle think I might be loved? Then my happiness only depends on my own audacity! But Adam —”

Ideal love and desire clashed with gratitude and friendship, all equally powerful, and, for a moment, love prevailed. The lover would have his day. Paz became brilliant, he tried to please, he told the story of the Polish insurrection in noble words, being questioned about it by the diplomatist. By the end of dinner Paz saw Clémentine hanging upon his lips and regarding him as a hero, forgetting that Adam too, after sacrificing a third of his vast fortune, had been an exile. At nine o'clock, after coffee had been served, Madame de Sérizy kissed her niece on the forehead, pressed her hand, and went away, taking Adam with her and leaving the Marquis de Ronquerolles and the Marquis du Rouvre, who soon followed. Paz and Clémentine were alone together.

"I will leave you now, madame," said Thaddeus.
"You will of course rejoin them at the Opera?"

"No," she answered, "I don't like dancing, and they give an odious ballet to-night '*La Révolte au Sérail*.'"

There was a moment's silence.

"Two years ago Adam would not have gone to the Opera without me," said Clémentine, not looking at Paz.

"He loves you madly," replied Thaddeus.

"Yes, and because he loves me madly he is all the more likely not to love me to-morrow," said the countess.

“How inexplicable Parisian women are!” exclaimed Thaddeus. “When they are loved to madness they want to be loved reasonably; and when they are loved reasonably they reproach a man for not loving them at all.”

“And they are quite right. Thaddeus,” she went on, smiling, “I know Adam well; I am not angry with him; he is volatile and above all *grand seigneur*. He will always be content to have me as his wife and he will never oppose any of my tastes, but —”

“Where is the marriage in which there are no *buts*?” said Thaddeus, gently, trying to give another direction to Clémentine’s mind.

The least presuming of men might well have had the thought which came near rendering this poor lover beside himself; it was this: “If I do not tell her now that I love her I am a fool,” he kept saying to himself.

Neither spoke; and there came between the pair one of those deep silences that are crowded with thoughts. The countess examined Paz covertly, and Paz observed her in a mirror. Buried in an armchair like a man digesting his dinner, the image of a husband or an indifferent old man, Paz crossed his hands upon his stomach and twirled his thumbs mechanically, looking stupidly at them.

“Why don’t you tell me something good of Adam?”

cried Clémentine suddenly. "Tell me that he is not volatile, you who know him so well."

The cry was fine.

"Now is the time," thought poor Paz, "to put an insurmountable barrier between us. Tell you good of Adam?" he said aloud. "I love him; you would not believe me; and I am incapable of telling you harm. My position is very difficult between you."

Clémentine lowered her head and looked down at the tips of his varnished boots.

"You Northern men have nothing but physical courage," she said complainingly; "you have no constancy in your opinions."

"How will you amuse yourself alone, madame?" said Paz, assuming an careless air.

"Are not you going to keep me company?"

"Excuse me for leaving you."

"What do you mean? Where are you going?"

The thought of an heroic falsehood had come into his head.

"I — I am going to the Circus in the Champs Élysées; it opens to-night, and I can't miss it."

"Why not?" said Clémentine, questioning him by a look that was half anger.

"Must I tell you why?" he said, coloring; "must I confide to you what I hide from Adam, who thinks my only love is Poland."

“ Ah ! a secret in our noble captain ? ”

“ A disgraceful one — which you will perhaps understand, and pity.”

“ You, disgraced ? ”

“ Yes, I, Comte Paz ; I am madly in love with a girl who travels all over France with the Bouthor family, — people who have the rival circus to Franconi ; but they play only at fairs. I have made the director at the Cirque-Olympique engage her.”

“ Is she handsome ? ”

“ To my thinking,” said Paz, in a melancholy tone. “ Malaga (that’s her stage name) is strong, active, and supple. Why do I prefer her to all other women in the world ? — well, I can’t tell you. When I look at her, with her black hair tied with a blue satin ribbon, floating on her bare and olive-colored shoulders, and when she is dressed in a white tunic with a gold edge, and a knitted silk bodice that makes her look like a living Greek statue, and when I see her carrying those flags in her hand to the sound of martial music, and jumping through the paper hoops which tear as she goes through, and lighting so gracefully on the galloping horse to such applause, — no hired clapping, — well, all that moves me.”

“ More than a handsome woman in a ballroom ? ” asked Clémentine, with amazement and curiosity.

“ Yes,” answered Paz, in a choking voice. “ Such

agility, such grace under constant danger seems to me the height of triumph for a woman. Yes, madame, Cinti and Malibran, Grisi and Taglioni, Pasta and Ellsler, all who reign or have reigned on the stage, can't be compared, to my mind, with Malaga, who can jump on or off a horse at full gallop, or stand on the point of one foot and fall easily into the saddle, and knit stockings, break eggs, and make an omelette with the horse at full speed, to the admiration of the people, — the real people, peasants and soldiers. Malaga, madame, is dexterity personified; her little wrist or her little foot can rid her of three or four men. She is the goddess of gymnastics."

"She must be stupid —"

"Oh, no," said Paz, "I find her as amusing as the heroine of 'Peveril of the Peak.' Thoughtless as a Bohemian, she says everything that comes into her head; she thinks no more about the future than you do of the sous you fling to the poor. She says grand things sometimes. You could n't make her believe that an old diplomatist was a handsome young man, not if you offered her a million of francs. Such love as hers is perpetual flattery to a man. Her health is positively insolent, and she has thirty-two orient pearls in lips of coral. Her muzzle — that's what she calls the lower part of her face — has, as Shakspeare expresses it, the savor of a heifer's nose. She can make a man un-

happy. She likes handsome men, strong men, Alexanders, gymnasts, clowns. Her trainer, a horrible brute, used to beat her to make her supple, and graceful, and intrepid — ”

“ You are positively intoxicated with Malaga.”

“ Oh, she is called Malaga only on the posters,” said Paz, with a piqued air. “ She lives in the rue Saint-Lazare, in a pretty apartment on the third story, all velvet and silk, like a princess. She has two lives, her circus life and the life of a pretty woman.”

“ Does she love you?”

“ She loves me — now you will laugh — solely because I’m a Pole. She saw an engraving of Poles rushing with Poniatowski into the Elster, — for all France persists in thinking that the Elster, where it is impossible to get drowned, is an impetuous flood, in which Poniatowski and his followers were engulfed. But in the midst of all this I am very unhappy, madame.”

A tear of rage fell from his eyes and affected the countess.

“ You men have such a passion for singularity.”

“ And you?” said Thaddeus.

“ I know Adam so well that I am certain he could forget me for some mountebank like your Malaga. Where did you first see her?”

“ At Saint-Cloud, last September, on the fête-day.

She was at a corner of a booth covered with flags, where the shows are given. Her comrades, all in Polish costumes, were making a horrible racket. I watched her standing there, silent and dumb, and I thought I saw a melancholy expression in her face ; in truth there was enough about her to sadden a girl of twenty. That touched me."

The countess was sitting in a delicious attitude, pensive and rather melancholy.

"Poor, poor Thaddeus!" she exclaimed. Then, with the kindliness of a true great lady she added, not without a malicious smile, "Well go, go to your Circus."

Thaddeus took her hand, kissed it, leaving a hot tear upon it, and went out.

Having invented this passion for a circus-rider, he bethought him that he must give it some reality. The only truth in his tale was the momentary attention he had given to Malaga at Saint-Cloud ; and he had since seen her name on the posters of the Circus, where the clown, for a tip of five francs, had told him that the girl was a foundling, stolen perhaps. Thaddeus now went to the Circus and saw her again. For ten francs one of the grooms (who take the place in circuses of the dressers at a theatre) informed him that Malaga was named Marguerite Turquet, and lived on the fifth story of a house in the rue des Fossés-du-Temple.

The following day Paz went to the faubourg du Temple, found the house, and asked to see Mademoiselle Turquet, who during the summer was substitute for the leading horsewoman at the Cirque-Olympique, and a supernumerary at a boulevard theatre in winter.

“Malaga!” cried the portress, rushing into the attic, “there’s a fine gentleman wanting you. He is getting information from Chapuzot, who is playing him off to give me time to tell you.”

“Thank you, M’ame Chapuzot; but what will he think of me if he finds me ironing my gown?”

“Pooh! when a man’s in love he loves everything about us.”

“Is he an Englishman? they are fond of horses.”

“No, he looks to me Spanish.”

“That’s a pity; they say Spaniards are always poor. Stay here with me, M’ame Chapuzot; I don’t want him to think I’m deserted.”

“Who is it you are looking for, monsieur?” asked Madame Chapuzot, opening the door for Thaddeus, who had now come upstairs.

“Mademoiselle Turquet.”

“My dear,” said the portress, with an air of importance, “here is some one to see you.”

A line on which the clothes were drying caught the captain’s hat and knocked it off.

“What is it you wish, monsieur?” said Malaga, picking up the hat and giving it to him.

“I saw you at the Circus,” said Thaddeus, “and you reminded me of a daughter whom I have lost, mademoiselle; and out of affection for my Héloïse, whom you resemble in a most striking manner, I should like to be of some service to you, if you will permit me.”

“Why, certainly; pray sit down, general,” said Madame Chapuzot; “nothing could be more straightforward, more gallant.”

“But I am not gallant, my good lady,” exclaimed Paz. “I am an unfortunate father who tries to deceive himself by a resemblance.”

“Then am I to pass for your daughter?” said Malaga, slyly, and not in the least suspecting the perfect sincerity of his proposal.

“Yes,” said Paz, “and I’ll come and see you sometimes. But you shall be lodged in better rooms, comfortably furnished.”

“I shall have furniture!” cried Malaga, looking at Madame Chapuzot.

“And servants,” said Paz, “and all you want.”

Malaga looked at the stranger suspiciously.

“What countryman is monsieur?”

“I am a Pole.”

“Oh! then I accept,” she said.

Paz departed, promising to return.

“ Well, that ’s a stiff one ! ” said Marguerite Turquet, looking at Madame Chapuzot ; “ I ’m half afraid he is wheedling me, to carry out some fancy of his own — Pooh ! I ’ll risk it.”

A month after this eccentric interview the circus-rider was living in a comfortable apartment furnished by Comte Adam’s own upholsterer, Paz having judged it desirable to have his folly talked about at the hôtel Laginski. Malaga, to whom this adventure was like a leaf out of the Arabian Nights, was served by Monsieur and Madame Chapuzot in the double capacity of friends and servants. The Chapuzots and Marguerite were constantly expecting some result of all this ; but at the end of three months none of them were able to make out the meaning of the Polish count’s caprice. Paz arrived duly and passed about an hour there once a week, during which time he sat in the salon, and he never went into Malaga’s boudoir nor into her bedroom, in spite of the clever manœuvring of the Chapuzots and Malaga to get him there. The count would ask questions as to the small events of Marguerite’s life, and each time that he came he left two gold pieces of forty francs each on the mantel-piece.

“ He looks as if he did n’t care to be here,” said Madame Chapuzot.

“ Yes,” said Malaga, “ the man’s as cold as an icicle.”

“But he’s a good fellow all the same,” cried Chapuzot, who was happy in a new suit of clothes made of blue cloth, in which he looked like the servant of some minister.

The sum which Paz deposited weekly on the mantelpiece, joined to Malaga’s meagre salary, gave her the means of sumptuous living compared with her former poverty. Wonderful stories went the rounds of the Circus about Malaga’s good-luck. Her vanity increased the six thousand francs which Paz had spent on her furniture to sixty thousand. According to the clowns and the supers, Malaga was squandering money ; and she now appeared at the Circus wearing burnous and shawls and elegant scarfs. The Pole, it was agreed on all sides, was the best sort of man a circus-rider had ever encountered, not fault-finding nor jealous, and willing to let Malaga do just what she liked.

“Some women have the luck of it,” said Malaga’s rival, “and I’m not one of them, — though I do draw a third of the receipts.”

Malaga wore pretty things, and occasionally “showed her head” (a term in the lexicon of such characters) in the Bois, where the fashionable young men of the day began to remark her. In fact, before long Malaga was very much talked about in the questionable world of equivocal women, who presently attacked her good fortune by calumnies. They said she was a somnambu-

list, and the Pole was a magnetizer who was using her to discover the philosopher's stone. Some even more envenomed scandals drove her to a curiosity that was greater than Psyche's. She reported them in tears to Paz.

"When I want to injure a woman," she said in conclusion, "I don't calumniate her; I don't declare that some one magnetizes her to get stones out of her, but I say plainly that she is humpbacked, and I prove it. Why do you compromise me in this way?"

Paz maintained a cruel silence. Madame Chapuzot was not long in discovering the name and title of Comte Paz; then she heard certain positive facts at the hôtel Laginski: for instance, that Paz was a bachelor, and had never been known to have a daughter, alive or dead, in Poland or in France. After that Malaga could not control a feeling of terror.

"My dear child," Madame Chapuzot would say, "that monster" — (a man who contented himself with only looking, in a sly way, — not daring to come out and say things, — and such a beautiful creature too, as Malaga, — of course such a man was a monster, according to Madame Chapuzot's ideas) — "that monster is trying to get a hold upon you, and make you do something illegal and criminal. Holy Father, if you should get into the police-courts! it makes me tremble from head to foot; suppose they should put you in the news-

papers! I'll tell you what I should do in your place; I'd warn the police."

One particular day, after many foolish notions had fermented for some time in Malaga's mind, Paz having laid his money as usual on the mantel-piece, she seized the bits of gold and flung them in his face, crying out, "I don't want stolen money!"

The captain gave the gold to Chapuzot, went away without a word, and did not return.

Clémentine was at this time at her uncle's place in Burgundy.

When the Circus troop discovered that Malaga had lost her Polish count, much excitement was produced among them. Malaga's display of honor was considered folly by some, and shrewdness by others. The conduct of the Pole, however, even when discussed by the cleverest of the women, seemed inexplicable. Thaddeus received in the course of the next week thirty-seven letters from women of their kind. Happily for him, his astonishing reserve did not excite the curiosity of the fashionable world, and was only discussed in the demi-mondaine regions.

Two weeks later the handsome circus-rider, crippled by debt, wrote the following letter to Comte Paz, which, having fallen into the hands of Comte Adam, was read by several of the dandies of the day, who pronounced it a masterpiece:—

“ You, whom I still dare to call my friend, will you not pity me after all that has passed, — which you have so ill understood? My heart disavows whatever may have wounded your feelings. If I was fortunate enough to charm you and keep you beside me in the past, return to me; otherwise, I shall fall into despair. Poverty has overtaken me, and you do not know what *horrid things* it brings with it. Yesterday I lived on a herring at two sous, and one sou of bread. Is that a breakfast for the woman you loved? The Chapuzots have left me, though they seemed so devoted. Your desertion has caused me to see to the bottom of all human attachments. The dog we feed does not leave us, but the Chapuzots have gone. A sheriff has seized everything on behalf of the landlord, who has no heart, and the jeweller, who refused to wait even ten days, — for when we lose the confidence of such as you, credit goes too. What a position for women who have nothing to reproach themselves with but the happiness they have given! My friend, I have taken all I have of any value to *my uncle's*; I have nothing but the memory of you left, and here is the winter coming on. I shall be fireless when it turns cold; for the boulevards are to play only melodramas, in which I have nothing but little bits of parts which don't *pose* a woman. How could you so misunderstand the nobleness of my feelings for you? — for there are two ways

of expressing gratitude. You who seemed so happy in seeing me well-off, how can you leave me in poverty? Oh, my sole friend on earth, before I go back to the country fairs with Bouthor's circus, where I can at least make a living, forgive me if I wish to know whether I have lost you forever. If I were to let myself think of you when I jump through the hoops, I should be sure to break my legs by losing *a time*. Whatever may be the result, I am yours for life.

“MARGUERITE TURQUET.”

“That letter,” thought Thaddeus, shouting with laughter, “is worth the ten thousand francs I have spent upon her.”

III.

CLÉMENTINE came home the next day, and the day after that Paz beheld her again, more beautiful and graceful than ever. After dinner, during which the countess treated Paz with an air of perfect indifference, a little scene took place in the salon between the count and his wife when Thaddeus had left them. On pretence of asking Adam's advice, Thaddeus had left Malaga's letter with him, as if by mistake.

"Poor Thaddeus!" said Adam, as Paz disappeared, "what a misfortune for a man of his distinction to be the plaything of the lowest kind of circus-rider. He will lose everything, and get lower and lower, and won't be recognizable before long. Here, read that," added the count, giving Malaga's letter to his wife.

Clémentine read the letter, which smelt of tobacco, and threw it from her with a look of disgust.

"Thick as the bandage is over his eyes," continued Adam, "he must have found out something; Malaga tricked him, no doubt."

"But he goes back to her," said Clémentine, "and he will forgive her! It is for such horrible women as that that you men have indulgence."

“Well, they need it,” said Adam.

“Thaddeus used to show some decency — in living apart from us,” she remarked. “He had better go away altogether.”

“Oh, my dear angel, that’s going too far,” said the count, who did not want the death of the sinner.

Paz, who knew Adam thoroughly, had enjoined him to secrecy, pretending to excuse his dissipations, and had asked his friend to lend him a few thousand francs for Malaga.

“He is a very firm fellow,” said Adam.

“How so?” asked Clémentine.

“Why, for having spent no more than ten thousand francs on her, and letting her send him that letter before he would ask me for enough to pay her debts. For a Pole, I call that firm.”

“He will ruin you,” said Clémentine, in the sharp tone of a Parisian woman, when she shows her feline distrusts.

“Oh, I know him,” said Adam; “he will sacrifice Malaga, if I ask him.”

“We shall see,” remarked the countess.

“If it is best for his own happiness, I sha’n’t hesitate to ask him to leave her. Constantin says that since Paz has been with her he, sober as he is, has sometimes come home quite excited. If he takes to intoxication I shall be just as grieved as if he were my own son.”

“Don’t tell me anything more about it,” cried the countess, with a gesture of disgust.

Two days later the captain perceived in the manner, the tones of voice, but, above all, in the eyes of the countess, the terrible results of Adam’s confidences. Contempt had opened a gulf between the beloved woman and himself. He was suddenly plunged into the deepest distress of mind, for the thought gnawed him, “I have myself made her despise me!” His own folly stared him in the face. Life then became a burden to him, the very sun turned gray. And yet, amid all these bitter thoughts, he found again some moments of pure joy. There were times when he could give himself up wholly to his admiration for his mistress, who paid not the slightest attention to him. Hanging about in corners at her parties and receptions, silent, all heart and eyes, he never lost one of her attitudes, nor a tone of her voice when she sang. He lived in her life; he groomed the horse which *she* rode, he studied the ways and means of that splendid establishment, to the interests of which he was now more devoted than ever. These silent pleasures were buried in his heart like those of a mother, whose heart a child never knows; for is it knowing anything unless we know all? His love was more perfect than the love of Petrarch for Laura, which found its ultimate reward in the treasures of fame, the triumph of the poem which

she had inspired. Surely the emotion that the Chevalier d'Assas felt in dying must have been to him a lifetime of joy. Such emotions as these Paz enjoyed daily, — without dying, but also without the guerdon of immortality.

But what is Love, that, in spite of all these ineffable delights, Paz should still have been unhappy? The Catholic religion has so magnified Love that she has wedded it indissolubly to respect and nobility of spirit. Love is therefore attended by those sentiments and qualities of which mankind is proud ; it is rare to find true Love existing where contempt is felt. Thaddeus was suffering from the wounds his own hand had given him. The trial of his former life, when he lived beside his mistress, unknown, unappreciated, but generously working for her, was better than this. Yes, he wanted the reward of his virtue, her respect, and he had lost it. He grew thin and yellow, and so ill with constant low fever that during the month of January he was obliged to keep his bed, though he refused to see a doctor. Comte Adam became very uneasy about him ; but the countess had the cruelty to remark : “ Let him alone ; don't you see it is only some Olympian trouble ? ” This remark, being repeated to Thaddeus, gave him the courage of despair ; he left his bed, went out, tried a few amusements, and recovered his health.

About the end of February Adam lost a large sum of money at the Jockey-Club, and as he was afraid of

his wife, he begged Thaddeus to let the sum appear in the accounts as if he had spent it on Malaga.

“There’s nothing surprising in your spending that sum on the girl; but if the countess finds out that I have lost it at cards I shall be lowered in her opinion, and she will always be suspicious in future.”

“Ha! this, too!” exclaimed Thaddeus, with a sigh.

“Now, Thaddeus, if you will do me this service we shall be forever quits, — though, indeed, I am your debtor now.”

“Adam, you will have children; don’t gamble any more,” said Paz.

“So Malaga has cost us another twenty thousand francs,” cried the countess, some time later, when she discovered this new generosity to Paz. “First, ten thousand, now twenty more, — thirty thousand! the income of which is fifteen hundred! the cost of my box at the Opera, and the whole fortune of many a bourgeois. Oh, you Poles!” she said, gathering some flowers in her greenhouse; “you are really incomprehensible. Why are you not furious with him?”

“Poor Paz is —”

“Poor Paz, poor Paz, indeed!” she cried, interrupting him, “what good does he do us? I shall take the management of the household myself. You can give him the allowance he refused, and let him settle it as he likes with his Circus.”

“He is very useful to us, Clémentine. He has certainly saved over forty thousand francs this last year. And besides, my dear angel, he has managed to put a hundred thousand with Nucingen, which a steward would have pocketed.”

Clémentine softened down; but she was none the less hard in her feelings to Thaddeus. A few days later, she requested him to come to that boudoir where, one year earlier, she had been surprised into comparing him with her husband. This time she received him alone, without perceiving the slightest danger in so doing.

“My dear Paz,” she said, with the condescending familiarity of the great to their inferiors, “if you love Adam as you say you do, you will do a thing which he will not ask of you, but which I, his wife, do not hesitate to exact.”

“About Malaga?” said Thaddeus, with bitterness in his heart.

“Well, yes,” she said; “if you wish to end your days in this house and continue good friends with us, you must give her up. How an old soldier —”

“I am only thirty-five, and have n’t a white hair.”

“You look old,” she said, “and that’s the same thing. How so careful a manager, so distinguished a —”

The horrible part of all this was her evident inten-

tion to rouse a sense of honor in his soul which she thought extinct.

“—so distinguished a man as you are, Thaddeus,” she resumed after a momentary pause which a gesture of his hand had led her to make, “can allow yourself to be caught like a boy! Your proceedings have made that woman celebrated. My uncle wanted to see her, and he did see her. My uncle is not the only one; Malaga receives a great many gentlemen. I did think you had a noble soul. For shame! Will she be such a loss that you can’t replace her?”

“Madame, if I knew any sacrifice I could make to recover your esteem I would make it; but to give up Malaga is not one —”

“In your position, that is what I should say myself, if I were a man,” replied Clémentine. “Well, if I accept it as a great sacrifice there can be no ill-will between us.”

Paz left the room, fearing he might commit some great folly, and feeling that wild ideas were getting the better of him. He went to walk in the open air, lightly dressed in spite of the cold, but without being able to cool the fire in his cheeks or on his brow.

“I thought you had a noble soul,” — the words still rang in his ears.

“A year ago,” he said to himself, “she thought me a hero who could fight the Russians single-handed!”

He thought of leaving the hôtel Laginski, and taking service with the spahis and getting killed in Africa, but the same great fear checked him. "Without me," he thought, "what would become of them? they would soon be ruined. Poor countess! what a horrible life it would be for her if she were reduced to even thirty thousand francs a year. No, since all is lost for me in this world, — courage! I will keep on as I am."

Every one knows that since 1830 the carnival in Paris has undergone a transformation which has made it European, and far more burlesque and otherwise lively than the late Carnival of Venice. Is it that the diminishing fortunes of the present time have led Parisians to invent a way of amusing themselves collectively, as for instance at their clubs, where they hold salons without hostesses and without manners, but very cheaply? However this may be, the month of March was prodigal of balls, at which dancing, joking, coarse fun, excitement, grotesque figures, and the sharp satire of Parisian wit, produced extravagant effects. These carnival follies had their special Pandemonium in the rue Saint-Honoré and their Napoleon in Musard, a small man born expressly to lead an orchestra as noisy as the disorderly audience, and to set the time for the galop, that witches' dance, which was one of Auber's triumphs, for it did not really take form or poesy till the grand galop in "Gustave" was given to the world.

That tremendous finale might serve as the symbol of an epoch in which for the last fifty years all things have hurried by with the rapidity of a dream.

Now, it happened that the grave Thaddeus, with one divine and immaculate image in his heart, proposed to Malaga, the queen of the carnival dances, to spend an evening at the Musard ball ; because he knew the countess, disguised to the teeth, intended to come there with two friends, all three accompanied by their husbands, and look on at the curious spectacle of one of these crowded balls.

On Shrove Tuesday, of the year 1838, at four o'clock in the morning, the countess, wrapped in a black domino and sitting on the lower step of the platform in the Babylonian hall, where Valentino has since then given his concerts, beheld Thaddeus, as Robert Macaire, threading the galop with Malaga in the dress of a savage, her head garnished with plumes like the horse of a hearse, and bounding through the crowd like a will-o-the-wisp.

“ Ah ! ” said Clémentine to her husband, “ you Poles have no honor at all ! I did believe in Thaddeus. He gave me his word that he would leave that woman ; he did not know that I should be here, seeing all unseen.”

A few days later she requested Paz to dine with them. After dinner Adam left them alone together, and Clémentine reproved Paz and let him know very

plainly that she did not wish him to live in her house any longer.

“Yes, madame,” said Paz, humbly, “you are right; I am a wretch; I did give you my word. But you see how it is; I put off leaving Malaga till after the carnival. Besides, that woman exerts an influence over me which —”

“An influence! — a woman who ought to be turned out of Musard’s by the police for such dancing!”

“I agree to all that; I accept the condemnation and I’ll leave your house. But you know Adam. If I give up the management of your property you must show energy yourself. I may have been to blame about Malaga, but I have taken the whole charge of your affairs, managed your servants, and looked after the very least details. I cannot leave you until I see you prepared to continue my management. You have now been married three years, and you are safe from the temptations to extravagance which come with the honeymoon. I see that Parisian women, and even titled ones, do manage both their fortunes and their households. Well, as soon as I am certain not so much of your capacity as of your perseverance I shall leave Paris.”

“It is Thaddeus of Warsaw, and not that Circus Thaddeus who speaks now,” said Clémentine. “Go, and come back cured.”

“Cured! never,” said Paz, his eyes lowered and fixed on Clémentine’s pretty feet. “You do not know, countess, what charm, what unexpected piquancy of mind she has.” Then, feeling his courage fail him, he added hastily, “There is not a woman in society, with her mincing airs, that is worth the honest nature of that young animal.”

“At any rate, I wish nothing of the animal about me,” said the countess, with a glance like that of an angry viper.

After that evening Comte Paz showed Clémentine the exact state of her affairs; he made himself her tutor, taught her the methods and difficulties of the management of property, the proper prices to pay for things, and how to avoid being cheated by her servants. He told her she could rely on Constantin and make him her major-domo. Thaddeus had trained the man thoroughly. By the end of May he thought the countess fully competent to carry on her affairs alone; for Clémentine was one of those far-sighted women, full of instinct, who have an innate genius as mistress of a household.

This position of affairs, which Thaddeus had led up to naturally, did not end without further cruel trials; his sufferings were fated not to be as sweet and tender as he was trying to make them. The poor lover forgot

to reckon on the hazard of events. Adam fell seriously ill, and Thaddeus, instead of leaving the house, stayed to nurse his friend. His devotion was unwearied. A woman who had any interest in employing her perspicacity might have seen in this devotion a sort of punishment imposed by a noble soul to repress an involuntary evil thought; but women see all, or see nothing, according to the condition of their souls — love is their sole illuminator.

During forty-five days Paz watched and tended Adam without appearing to think of Malaga, for the very good reason that he never did think of her. Clémentine, feeling that Adam was at the point of death though still he did not die, sent for all the leading doctors of Paris in consultation.

“If he comes safely out of this,” said the most distinguished of them all, “it will only be by an effort of nature. It is for those who nurse him to watch for the moment when they must second nature. The count’s life is in the hands of his nurses.”

Thaddeus went to find Clémentine and tell her this result of the consultation. He found her sitting in the Chinese pavilion, as much for a little rest as to leave the field to the doctors and not embarrass them. As he walked along the winding gravelled path which led to the pavilion, Thaddeus seemed to himself in the depths of an abyss described by Dante. The unfortunate man

had never dreamed that the possibility might arise of becoming Clémentine's husband, and now he had drowned himself in a ditch of mud. His face was convulsed, when he reached the kiosk, with an agony of grief; his head, like Medusa's, conveyed despair.

"Is he dead?" said Clémentine.

"They have given him up; that is, they leave him to nature. Do not go in; they are still there, and Bianchon is changing the dressings."

"Poor Adam! I ask myself if I have not sometimes pained him," she said.

"You have made him very happy," said Thaddeus; "you ought to be easy on that score, for you have shown every indulgence for him."

"My loss would be irreparable."

"But, dear, you judged him justly."

"I was never blind to his faults," she said, "but I loved him as a wife should love her husband."

"Then you ought, in case you lose him," said Thaddeus, in a voice which Clémentine had never heard him use, "to grieve for him less than if you lost a man who was your pride, your love, and all your life, — as some men are to you women. Surely you can be frank at this moment with a friend like me. I shall grieve, too; long before your marriage I had made him my child, I had sacrificed my life to him. If he dies I shall be without an interest on earth; but life is still beautiful to a widow of twenty-four."

“Ah! but you know that I love no one,” she said, with the impatience of grief.

“You don’t yet know what it is to love,” said Thaddeus.

“Oh, as husbands are, I have sense enough to prefer a child like my poor Adam to a superior man. It is now over a month that we have been saying to each other, ‘Will he live?’ and these alternations have prepared me, as they have you, for this loss. I can be frank with you. Well, I would give my life to save Adam. What is a woman’s independence in Paris? the freedom to let herself be taken in by ruined or dissipated men who pretend to love her. I pray to God to leave me this husband who is so kind, so obliging, so little fault-finding, and who is beginning to stand in awe of me.”

“You are honest, and I love you the better for it,” said Thaddeus, taking her hand which she yielded to him, and kissing it. “In solemn moments like these there is unspeakable satisfaction in finding a woman without hypocrisy. It is possible to converse with you. Let us look at the future. Suppose that God does not grant your prayer,—and no one cries to him more than I do, ‘Leave me my friend!’ Yes, these fifty nights have not weakened me; if thirty more days and nights are needed I can give them while you sleep,—yes, I will tear him from death if, as the doctors say,

nursing can save him. But suppose that in spite of you and me, the count dies, — well, then, if you were loved, oh, adored, by a man of a heart and soul that are worthy of you —”

“I may have wished for such love, foolishly, but I have never met with it.”

“Perhaps you are mistaken —”

Clémentine looked fixedly at Thaddeus, imagining that there was less of love than of cupidity in his thoughts; her eyes measured him from head to foot and poured contempt upon him; then she crushed him with the words, “Poor Malaga!” uttered in tones which a great lady alone can find to give expression to her disdain. She rose, leaving Thaddeus half unconscious behind her, slowly re-entered her boudoir, and went back to Adam’s chamber.

An hour later Paz returned to the sick-room, and began anew, with death in his heart, his care of the count. From that moment he said nothing. He was forced to struggle with the patient, whom he managed in a way that excited the admiration of the doctors. At all hours his watchful eyes were like lamps always lighted. He showed no resentment to Clémentine, and listened to her thanks without accepting them; he seemed both dumb and deaf. To himself he was saying, “She shall owe his life to me,” and he wrote the thought as it were in letters of fire on the walls of

Adam's room. On the fifteenth day Clémentine was forced to give up the nursing, lest she should utterly break down. Paz was unwearied. At last, towards the end of August, Bianchon, the family physician, told Clémentine that Adam was out of danger.

“Ah, madame, you are under no obligation to me,” he said; “without his friend, Comte Paz, we could not have saved him.”

The day after the meeting of Paz and Clémentine in the kiosk, the Marquis de Ronquerolles came to see his nephew. He was on the eve of starting for Russia on a secret diplomatic mission. Paz took occasion to say a few words to him. The first day that Adam was able to drive out with his wife and Thaddeus, a gendarme entered the courtyard as the carriage was about to leave it, and asked for Comte Paz. Thaddeus, who was sitting on the front seat of the calèche, turned to take a letter which bore the stamp of the ministry of Foreign affairs. Having read it, he put it into his pocket with a manner which prevented Clémentine or Adam from speaking of it. Nevertheless, by the time they reached the porte Maillot, Adam, full of curiosity, used the privilege of a sick man whose caprices are to be gratified, and said to Thaddeus: “There's no indiscretion between brothers who love each other, — tell me what there is in that despatch; I'm in a fever of curiosity.”

Clémentine glanced at Thaddeus with a vexed air, and remarked to her husband : “ He has been so sulky with me for the last two months that I shall never ask him anything again.”

“ Oh, as for that,” replied Paz, “ I can’t keep it out of the newspapers, so I may as well tell you at once. The Emperor Nicholas has had the grace to appoint me captain in a regiment which is to take part in the expedition to Khiva.”

“ You are not going?” cried Adam.

“ Yes, I shall go, my dear fellow. Captain I came, and captain I return. We shall dine together to-morrow for the last time. If I don’t start at once for St. Petersburg I shall have to make the journey by land, and I am not rich, and I must leave Malaga a little independence. I ought to think of the only woman who has been able to understand me ; she thinks me grand, superior. I dare say she is faithless, but she would jump — ”

“ Through the hoop, for your sake and come down safely on the back of her horse,” said Clémentine, sharply.

“ Oh, you don’t know Malaga,” said the captain, bitterly, with a sarcastic look in his eyes which made Clémentine thoughtful and uneasy.

“ Good-by to the young trees of this beautiful Bois, which you Parisians love, and the exiles who find a

home here love too," he said, presently. "My eyes will never again see the evergreens of the avenue de Mademoiselle, nor the acacias nor the cedars of the *rond-points*. On the borders of Asia, fighting for the Emperor, promoted to the command, perhaps, by force of courage and by risking my life, it may happen that I shall regret these Champs-Élysées where I have driven beside you, and where you pass. Yes, I shall grieve for Malaga's hardness — the Malaga of whom I am now speaking."

This was said in a manner that made Clémentine tremble.

"Then you do love Malaga very much?" she asked.

"I have sacrificed for her the honor that no man should ever sacrifice."

"What honor?"

"That which we desire to keep at any cost in the eyes of our idol."

After that reply Thaddeus said no more; he was silent until, as they passed a wooden building on the Champs Élysées, he said, pointing to it, "That is the Circus."

He went to the Russian Embassy before dinner, and thence to the Foreign office, and the next morning he had started for Havre before the count and countess were up.

"I have lost a friend," said Adam, with tears in his

eyes, when he heard that Paz had gone, — “a friend in the true meaning of the word. I don’t know what has made him abandon me as if a pestilence were in my house. We are not friends to quarrel about a woman,” he said, looking intently at Clémentine. “You heard what he said yesterday about Malaga. Well, he has never so much as touched the little finger of that girl.”

“How do you know that?” said Clémentine.

“I had the natural curiosity to go and see *Mademoiselle Turquet*, and the poor girl can’t explain even to herself the absolute reserve which Thad — ”

“Enough!” said the countess, retreating into her bedroom. “Can it be that I am the victim of some noble mystification?” she asked herself. The thought had scarcely crossed her mind when Constantin brought her the following letter written by Thaddeus during the night: —

“COUNTESS, — To seek death in the Caucasus and carry with me your contempt is more than I can bear. A man should die untainted. When I saw you for the first time I loved you as we love a woman whom we shall love forever, even though she be unfaithful to us. I loved you thus, — I, the friend of the man you had chosen and were about to marry; I, poor; I, the steward, — a voluntary service, but still the steward of your household.

“In this immense misfortune I found a happy life. To be to you an indispensable machine, to know myself useful to your comfort, your luxury, has been the source of deep enjoyments. If these enjoyments were great when I thought only of Adam, think what they were to my soul when the woman I loved was the mainspring of all I did. I have known the pleasures of maternity in my love. I accepted life thus. Like the paupers who live along the great highways, I built myself a hut on the borders of your beautiful domain, though I never sought to approach you. Poor and lonely, struck blind by Adam’s good fortune, I was, nevertheless, the giver. Yes, you were surrounded by a love pure as a guardian-angel’s; it waked while you slept; it caressed you with a look as you passed; it was happy in its own existence, — you were the sun of my native land to me, poor exile, who now writes to you with tears in his eyes as he thinks of the happiness of those first days.

“When I was eighteen years old, having no one to love, I took for my ideal mistress a charming woman in Warsaw, to whom I confided all my thoughts, my wishes; I made her the queen of my nights and days. She knew nothing of all this; why should she? I loved my love.

“You can fancy from this incident of my youth how happy I was merely to live in the sphere of your exist-

ence, to groom your horse, to find the new-coined gold for your purse, to prepare the splendor of your dinners and your balls, to see you eclipsing the elegance of those whose fortunes were greater than yours, and all by my own good management. Ah! with what ardor I have ransacked Paris when Adam would say to me, '*She* wants this or that.' It was a joy such as I can never express to you. You wished for a trifle at one time which kept me seven hours in a cab scouring the city; and what delight it was to weary myself for you. Ah! when I saw you, unseen by you, smiling among your flowers, I could forget that no one loved me. On certain days, when my happiness turned my head, I went at night and kissed the spot where, to me, your feet had left their luminous traces. The air you had breathed was balmy; in it I breathed in more of life; I inhaled, as they say persons do in the tropics, a vapor laden with creative principles.

"I *must* tell you these things to explain the strange presumption of my involuntary thoughts, — I would have died rather than avow it until now.

"You will remember those few days of curiosity when you wished to know the man who performed the household miracles you had sometimes noticed. I thought, — forgive me, madame, — I believed you might love me. Your good-will, your glances interpreted by me, a lover, seemed to me so dangerous — for me —

that I invented that story of Malaga, knowing it was the sort of liaison which women cannot forgive. I did it in a moment when I felt that my love would be communicated, fatally, to you. Despise me, crush me with the contempt you have so often cast upon me when I did not deserve it; and yet I am certain that, if, on that evening when your aunt took Adam away from you, I had said what I have now written to you, I should, like the tamed tiger that sets his teeth once more in living flesh, and scents the blood, and —

“Midnight.

“I could not go on; the memory of that hour is still too living. Yes, I was maddened. Was there hope for me in your eyes? then victory with its scarlet banners would have flamed in mine and fascinated yours. My crime has been to think all this; perhaps wrongly. You alone can judge of that dreadful scene when I drove back love, desire, all the most invincible forces of our manhood, with the cold hand of gratitude, — gratitude which must be eternal.

“Your terrible contempt has been my punishment. You have shown me there is no return from loathing or disdain. I love you madly. I should have gone had Adam died; all the more must I go because he lives. A man does not tear his friend from the arms of death to betray him. Besides, my going is my punishment for the thought that came to me that I would

let him die, when the doctors said that his life depended on his nursing.

“Adieu, madame; in leaving Paris I lose all, but you lose nothing now in my being no longer near you.

“Your devoted

“THADDEUS PAZ.”

“If my poor Adam says he has lost a friend, what have I lost?” thought Clémentine, sinking into a chair with her eyes fixed on the carpet.

The following letter Constantin had orders to give privately to the count: —

“MY DEAR ADAM, — Malaga has told me all. In the name of all your future happiness, never let a word escape you to Clémentine about your visits to that girl; let her think that Malaga has cost me a hundred thousand francs. I know Clémentine’s character; she will never forgive either your losses at cards or your visits to Malaga.

“I am not going to Khiva, but to the Caucasus. I have the spleen; and at the pace at which I mean to go I shall be either Prince Paz in three years, or dead. Good-by; though I have taken sixty thousand francs from Nucingen, our accounts are even.

“THADDEUS.”

“Idiot that I was,” thought Adam; “I came near cutting my throat just now, talking about Malaga.”

It is now three years since Paz went away. The newspapers have as yet said nothing about any Prince Paz. The Comtesse Laginska is immensely interested in the expeditions of the Emperor Nicholas; she is Russian to the core, and reads with a sort of avidity all the news that comes from that distant land. Once or twice every winter she says to the Russian ambassador, with an air of indifference, "Do you know what has become of our poor Comte Paz?"

Alas! most Parisian women, those beings who think themselves so clever and clear-sighted, pass and repass beside a Paz and never recognize him. Yes, many a Paz is unknown and misconceived, but — horrible to think of! — some are misconceived even though they are loved. The simplest women in society exact a certain amount of conventional sham from the greatest men. A noble love signifies nothing to them if rough and unpolished; it needs the cutting and setting of a jeweller to give it value in their eyes.

In January, 1842, the Comtesse Laginska, with her charm of gentle melancholy, inspired a violent passion in the Comte de La Palférine, one of the most daring and presumptuous lions of the day. La Palférine was well aware that the conquest of a woman so guarded by reserve as the Comtesse Laginska was difficult, but he thought he could inveigle this charming creature into committing herself if he took her unawares, by

the assistance of a certain friend of her own, a woman already jealous of her.

Quite incapable, in spite of her intelligence, of suspecting such treachery, the Comtesse Laginska committed the imprudence of going with her so-called friend to a masked ball at the Opera. About three in the morning, led away by the excitement of the scene, Clémentine, on whom La Palférine had expended his seductions, consented to accept a supper, and was about to enter the carriage of her faithless friend. At this critical moment her arm was grasped by a powerful hand, and she was taken, in spite of her struggles, to her own carriage, the door of which stood open, though she did not know it was there.

“He has never left Paris!” she exclaimed to herself as she recognized Thaddeus, who disappeared when the carriage drove away.

Did any woman ever have a like romance in her life? Clémentine is constantly hoping she may again see Paz.

MADAME FIRMIANI.

MADAME FIRMIANI.

TO MY DEAR ALEXANDRE DE BERNY.

HIS OLD FRIEND,

DE BALZAC.

MANY tales, either rich in situations or made dramatic by some of the innumerable tricks of chance, carry with them their own particular setting, which can be rendered artistically or simply by those who narrate them, without their subjects losing any, even the least of their charms. But there are some incidents in human experience to which the heart alone is able to give life; there are certain details — shall we call them anatomical? — the delicate touches of which cannot be made to reappear unless by an equally delicate rendering of thought; there are portraits which require the infusion of a soul, and mean nothing unless the subtlest expression of the speaking countenance is given; furthermore, there are things which we know not how to say or do without the aid of secret harmonies which a day, an hour, a fortunate conjunction of

celestial signs, or an inward moral tendency may produce.

Such mysterious revelations are imperatively needed in order to tell this simple history, in which we seek to interest those souls that are naturally grave and reflective and find their sustenance in tender emotions. If the writer, like the surgeon beside his dying friend, is filled with a species of reverence for the subject he is handling, should not the reader share in that inexplicable feeling? Is it so difficult to put ourselves in unison with the vague and nervous sadness which casts its gray tints all about us, and is, in fact, a semi-illness, the gentle sufferings of which are often pleasing? If the reader is of those who sometimes think upon the dear ones they have lost, if he is alone, if the day is waning or the night has come, let him read on; otherwise, he should lay aside this book at once. If he has never buried a good old relative, infirm and poor, he will not understand these pages, which to some will seem redolent of musk, to others as colorless and virtuous as those of Florian. In short, the reader must have known the luxury of tears, must have felt the silent pangs of a passing memory, the vision of a dear yet far-off Shade, — memories which bring regret for all that earth has swallowed up, with smiles for vanished joys.

And now, believe that the writer would not, for the

wealth of England, steal from poesy a single lie with which to embellish this narrative. The following is a true history, on which you may safely spend the treasures of your sensibility — if you have any.

In these days the French language has as many idioms and represents as many idiosyncracies as there are varieties of men in the great family of France. It is extremely curious and amusing to listen to the different interpretations or versions of the same thing or the same event by the various species which compose the genus Parisian, — “Parisian” is here used merely to generalize our remark.

Therefore, if you should say to an individual of the species Practical, “Do you know Madame Firmiani?” he would present that lady to your mind by the following inventory: “Fine house in the rue du Bac, salons handsomely furnished, good pictures, one hundred thousand francs a year, husband formerly receiver-general of the department of Montenotte.” So saying, the Practical man, rotund and fat and usually dressed in black, will project his lower lip and wrap it over the upper, nodding his head as if to add: “Solid people, those; nothing to be said against them.” Ask no further; Practical men settle everybody’s status by figures, incomes, or solid acres, — a phrase of their lexicon.

Turn to the right, and put the same question to that

other man, who belongs to the species Lounger. “Madame Firmiani?” he says; “yes, yes, I know her well; I go to her parties; receives Wednesdays; highly creditable house.” — Madame Firmiani is metamorphosed into a house! but the house is not a pile of stones architecturally superposed, of course not, the word presents in Lounger’s language an indescribable idiom. — Here the Lounger, a spare man with an agreeable smile, a sayer of pretty nothings with more acquired cleverness than native wit, stoops to your ear and adds, with a shrewd glance: “I have never seen Monsieur Firmiani. His social position is that of looking after property in Italy. Madame Firmiani is a Frenchwoman, and spends her money like a Parisian. She has excellent tea. It is one of the few houses where you can amuse yourself; the refreshments are exquisite. It is very difficult to get admitted; therefore, of course, one meets only the best society in her salons.” Here the Lounger takes a pinch of snuff; he inhales it slowly and seems to say: “*I go there, but don’t expect me to present you.*”

Evidently the Lounger considers that Madame Firmiani keeps a sort of inn, without a sign.

“Why do you want to know Madame Firmiani? Her parties are as dull as the Court itself. What is the good of possessing a mind unless to avoid such salons, where stupid talk and foolish little ballads are

the order of the day." You have questioned a being classed Egotist, a species who would like to keep the universe under lock and key, and let nothing be done without their permission. They are unhappy if others are happy; they forgive nothing but vices, downfalls, frailties, and like none but protégés. Aristocrats by inclination, they make themselves democrats out of spite, preferring to consort with inferiors as equals.

"Oh, Madame Firmiani, my dear fellow! she is one of those adorable women who serve as Nature's excuse for all the ugly ones she creates. Madame Firmiani is enchanting, and so kind! I wish I were in power and possessed millions that I might—" (here a whisper). "Shall I present you?" The speaker is a youth of the Student species, known for his boldness among men and his timidity in a boudoir.

"Madame Firmiani?" cries another, twirling his cane. "I'll tell you what I think of her; she is a woman between thirty and thirty-five; faded complexion, handsome eyes, flat figure, contralto voice worn out, much dressed, rather rouged, charming manners; in short, my dear fellow, the remains of a pretty woman who is still worth the trouble of a passion." This remark is from the species Fop, who has just breakfasted, does n't weigh his words, and is about to mount his horse. At that particular moment Fops are pitiless.

"Magnificent collection of pictures in her house;

go and see them by all means," answers another. "Nothing finer." You have questioned one of the species Connoisseur. He leaves you to go to Pérignon's or Tripet's. To him, Madame Firmiani is a collection of painted canvases.

A WOMAN: "Madame Firmiani? I don't wish you to visit her." This remark is rich in meanings. Madame Firmiani! dangerous woman! a siren! dresses well, has taste; gives other women sleepless nights. Your informant belongs to the genus Spiteful.

AN ATTACHÉ TO AN EMBASSY: "Madame Firmiani? Is n't she from Antwerp? I saw her ten years ago in Rome; she was very handsome then." Individuals of the species Attaché have a mania for talking in the style of Talleyrand. Their wit is often so refined that the point is imperceptible; they are like billiard-players who avoid hitting a ball with consummate dexterity. These individuals are usually taciturn, and when they talk it is only about Spain, Vienna, Italy, or Petersburg. Names of countries act like springs in their mind; press them, and the ringing of their changes begins.

"That Madame Firmiani sees a great deal of the faubourg Saint-Germain, does n't she?" This from a person who desires to belong to the class Distinguished. She gives the *de* to everybody, — to Monsieur Dupin senior, to Monsieur Lafayette; she flings it right and left and humiliates many. This woman spends her life

in striving to know and do “the right thing;” but, for her sins, she lives in the Marais, and her husband is a lawyer, — a lawyer before the Royal courts, however.

“Madame Firmiani, monsieur? I do not know her.” This man belongs to the species Duke. He recognizes none but the women who have been presented at court. Pray excuse him, he was one of Napoleon’s creations.

“Madame Firmiani? surely she used to sing at the Opera-house.” Species Ninny. The individuals of this species have an answer for everything. They will tell lies sooner than say nothing.

TWO OLD LADIES, wives of former magistrates: *The First* (wears a cap with bows, her face is wrinkled, her nose sharp, voice hard, carries a prayer-book in her hand): “What was that Madame Firmiani’s maiden name?” — *The Second* (small face red as a crab-apple, gentle voice): “She was a Cadignan, my dear, niece of the old Prince de Cadignan, consequently cousin to the present Duc de Maufrigneuse.”

Madame Firmiani is a Cadignan. She might have neither virtue, nor wealth, nor youth, but she would still be a Cadignan; it is like a prejudice, always alive and working.

AN ORIGINAL: “My dear fellow, I’ve seen no galoshes in her antechamber; consequently you can visit her without compromising yourself, and play cards there without fear; if there *are* any scoundrels in her salons,

they are people of quality and come in their carriages ; such persons never quarrel."

OLD MAN BELONGING TO THE GENUS OBSERVER : " If you call on Madame Firmiani, my good friend, you will find a beautiful woman sitting at her ease by the corner of her fireplace. She will scarcely rise to receive you, — she only does that for women, ambassadors, dukes, and persons of great distinction. She is very gracious, she possesses charm ; she converses well, and likes to talk on many topics. There are many indications of a passionate nature about her ; but she has, evidently, so many adorers that she cannot have a favorite. If suspicion rested on two or three of her intimates, we might say that one or other of them was the *cavaliere servente* ; but it does not. The lady is a mystery. She is married, though none of us have seen her husband. Monsieur Firmiani is altogether mythical ; he is like that third post-horse for which we pay though we never behold it. Madame has the finest contralto voice in Europe, so say judges ; but she has never been heard to sing more than two or three times since she came to Paris. She receives much company, but goes nowhere."

The Observer speaks, you will notice, as an Oracle. His words, anecdotes, and quotations must be accepted as truths, under pain of being thought without social education or intelligence, and of causing him to slander

you with much zest in twenty salons where he is considered indispensable. The Observer is forty years of age, never dines at home, declares himself no longer dangerous to women, wears a maroon coat, and has a place reserved for him in several boxes at the "Bouffons." He is sometimes confounded with the Parasite; but he has filled too many real functions to be thought a sponger; moreover he possesses a small estate in a certain department, the name of which he has never been known to utter.

"Madame Firmiani? why, my dear fellow, she was Murat's former mistress." This man belongs to the Contradictors, — persons who note errata in memoirs, rectify dates, correct facts, bet a hundred to one, and are certain about everything. You can easily detect them in some gross blunder in the course of a single evening. They will tell you they were in Paris at the time of Mallet's conspiracy, forgetting that half an hour earlier they had described how they crossed the Bere-sina. Nearly all Contradictors are *chevaliers* of the Legion of honor; they talk loudly, have retreating foreheads, and play high.

"Madame Firmiani a hundred thousand francs a year? nonsense, you are crazy! Some people will persist in giving millions with the liberality of authors, to whom it does n't cost a penny to dower their heroines. Madame Firmiani is simply a coquette, who has

lately ruined a young man, and now prevents him from making a fine marriage. If she were not so handsome she would n't have a penny."

Ah, *that one* — of course you recognize him — belongs to the species Envious. There is no need to sketch him; the species is as well known as that of the *felis domestica*. But how explain the perennial vigor of envy? — a vice that brings nothing in!

Persons in society, literary men, honest folk, — in short, individuals of all species, — were promulgating in the month of January, 1824, so many different opinions about Madame Firmiani that it would be tedious to write them down. We have merely sought to show that a man seeking to understand her, yet unwilling or unable to go to her house, would (from the answers to his inquiries) have had equal reason to suppose her a widow or wife, silly or wise, virtuous or the reverse, rich or poor, soulless or full of feeling, handsome or plain, — in short, there were as many Madame Firmianis as there are species in society, or sects in catholicism. Frightful reflection! we are all like lithographic blocks, from which an indefinite number of copies can be drawn by criticism, — the proofs being more or less like us according to a distribution of shading which is so nearly imperceptible that our reputation depends (barring the calumnies of friends and the witticisms of newspapers) on the balance struck by our

criticisers between Truth that limps and Falsehood to which Parisian wit gives wings.

Madame Firmiani, like other noble and dignified women who make their hearts a sanctuary and disdain the world, was liable, therefore, to be totally misjudged by Monsieur de Bourbonne, an old country magnate, who had reason to think a great deal about her during the winter of this year. He belonged to the class of provincial Planters, men living on their estates, accustomed to keep close accounts of everything and to bargain with the peasantry. Thus employed, a man becomes sagacious in spite of himself, just as soldiers in the long run acquire courage from routine. The old gentleman, who had come to Paris from Touraine to satisfy his curiosity about Madame Firmiani, and found it not at all assuaged by the Parisian gossip which he heard, was a man of honor and breeding. His sole heir was a nephew, whom he greatly loved, in whose interests he planted his poplars. When a man thinks without annoyance about his heir, and watches the trees grow daily finer for his future benefit, affection grows too with every blow of the spade around their roots. Though this phenomenal feeling is not common, it is still to be met with in Touraine.

This cherished nephew, named Octave de Camps, was a descendant of the famous Abbé de Camps so well known to bibliophiles and learned men, — who, by

the bye, are not at all the same thing. People in the provinces have the bad habit of branding with a sort of decent reprobation any young man who sells his inherited estates. This antiquated prejudice has interfered very much with the stock-jobbing which the present government encourages for its own interests. Without consulting his uncle, Octave had lately sold an estate belonging to him to the Black Band.¹ The château de Villaines would have been pulled down were it not for the remonstrances which the old uncle made to the representatives of the "Pickaxe company." To increase the old gentleman's wrath, a distant relative (one of those cousins of small means and much astuteness about whom shrewd provincials are wont to remark, "No lawsuits for me with him!") had, as it were by accident, come to visit Monsieur de Bourbonne, and *incidentally* informed him of his nephew's ruin. Monsieur Octave de Camps, he said, having wasted his means on a certain Madame Firmiani, was now reduced to teaching mathematics for a living, while awaiting his uncle's death, not daring to let him know of his dissipations. This distant cousin, a sort of Charles Moor, was not ashamed to give this fatal news to the old gentleman as he sat by his fire, digesting a profuse provincial dinner.

¹ The *Bande Noire* was a mysterious association of speculators, whose object was to buy in landed estates, cut them up, and sell them off in small parcels to the peasantry, or others.

But heirs cannot always rid themselves of uncles as easily as they would like to. Thanks to his obstinacy, this particular uncle refused to believe the story, and came out victorious from the attack of indigestion produced by his nephew's biography. Some shocks affect the heart, others the head; but in this case the cousin's blow fell on the digestive organs and did little harm, for the old man's stomach was sound. Like a true disciple of Saint Thomas, Monsieur de Bourbonne came to Paris, unknown to Octave, resolved to make full inquiries as to his nephew's insolvency. Having many acquaintances in the faubourg Saint-Germain, among the Listomères, the Lenoncourts, and the Vandenesses, he heard so much gossip, so many facts and falsities, about Madame Firmiani that he resolved to be presented to her under the name of de Rouxellay, that of his estate in Touraine. The astute old gentleman was careful to choose an evening when he knew that Octave would be engaged in finishing a piece of work which was to pay him well, — for this so-called lover of Madame Firmiani still went to her house; a circumstance that seemed difficult to explain. As to Octave's ruin, that, unfortunately, was no fable, as Monsieur de Bourbonne had at once discovered.

Monsieur de Rouxellay was not at all like the provincial uncle at the Gymnase. Formerly in the King's guard, a man of the world and a favorite among women,

he knew how to present himself in society with the courteous manners of the olden time; he could make graceful speeches and understand the whole Charter, or most of it. Though he loved the Bourbons with noble frankness, believed in God as a gentleman should, and read nothing but the “*Quotidienne*,” he was not as ridiculous as the liberals of his department would fain have had him. He could hold his own in the court circle, provided no one talked to him of “*Moses in Egypt*,” nor of the drama, or romanticism, or local color, nor of railways. He himself had never got beyond Monsieur de Voltaire, Monsieur le Comte de Buffon, Peyronnet, and the Chevalier Glück, the Queen’s favorite musician.

“*Madame*,” he said to the Marquise de Listomère, who was on his arm as they entered Madame Firmiani’s salons, “if this woman is my nephew’s mistress, I pity him. How can she live in the midst of this luxury and know that he is in a garret? Hasn’t she any soul? Octave is a fool to have given up such an estate as Villaines for a —”

Monsieur de Bourbonne belonged to the species Fossil, and used the language of the days of yore.

“But suppose he had lost it at play?”

“Then, madame, he would at least have had the pleasure of gambling.”

“And do you think he has had no pleasure here? See! look at Madame Firmiani.”

The brightest memories of the old man faded at the sight of his nephew's so-called mistress. His anger died away in the gracious exclamation which came from his lips as he looked at her. By one of those fortunate accidents which happen only to pretty women, it was a moment when all her beauties shone with peculiar lustre, due perhaps to the wax-lights, to the charming simplicity of her dress, to the ineffable atmosphere of elegance that surrounded her. One must needs have studied the transitions of an evening in a Parisian salon to appreciate the imperceptible lights and shades which color a woman's face and vary it. There comes a moment when, content with her toilet, pleased by her own wit, delighted to be admired, and feeling herself the queen of a salon full of remarkable men who smile to her, the Parisian woman reaches a full consciousness of her grace and charm ; her beauty is enhanced by the looks she gathers in, — a mute homage which she transfers with subtile glances to the man she loves. At moments like these a woman is invested with supernatural power and becomes a magician, a charmer, without herself knowing that she is one ; involuntarily she inspires the love that fills her own bosom ; her smiles and glances fascinate. If this condition, which comes from the soul, can give attraction even to a plain woman, with what radiance does it not invest a woman of natural elegance, distinguished bearing, fair,

fresh, with speaking eyes, and dressed in a taste that wrings approval from artists and her bitterest rivals.

Have you ever, for your happiness, met a woman whose harmonious voice gives to her speech the same charm that emanates from her manners? a woman who knows how to speak and to be silent, whose words are happily chosen, whose language is pure, and who concerns herself in your interests with delicacy? Her raillery is caressing, her criticism never wounds; she neither discourses nor argues, but she likes to lead a discussion and stop it at the right moment. Her manner is affable and smiling, her politeness never forced, her readiness to serve others never servile; she reduces the respect she claims to a soft shadow; she never wearies you, and you leave her satisfied with her and with yourself. Her charming grace is conveyed to all the things with which she surrounds herself. Everything about her pleases the eye; in her presence you breathe, as it were, your native air. This woman is natural. There is no effort about her; she is aiming at no effect; her feelings are shown simply, because they are true. Frank herself, she does not wound the vanity of others; she accepts men as God made them; pitying the vicious, forgiving defects and absurdities, comprehending all ages, and vexed by nothing, because she has had the sense and tact to foresee all. Tender and gay, she gratifies before she consoles. You love

her so well that if this angel did wrong you would be ready to excuse her. If, for your happiness, you have met with such a woman, you know Madame Firmiani.

After Monsieur de Bourbonne had talked with her for ten minutes, sitting beside her, his nephew was forgiven. He perceived that whatever the actual truth might be, the relation between Madame Firmiani and Octave covered some mystery. Returning to the illusions that gild the days of youth, and judging Madame Firmiani by her beauty, the old gentleman became convinced that a woman so innately conscious of her dignity as she appeared to be was incapable of a bad action. Her dark eyes told of inward peace; the lines of her face were so noble, the profile so pure, and the passion he had come to investigate seemed so little to oppress her heart, that the old man said to himself, while noting all the promises of love and virtue given by that adorable countenance, "My nephew is committing some folly."

Madame Firmiani acknowledged to twenty-five. But the Practicals proved that having married the invisible Firmiani (then a highly respectable individual in the forties) in 1813, at the age of sixteen, she must be at least twenty-eight in 1825. However the same persons also asserted that at no period of her life had she ever been so desirable or so completely a woman. She was now at an age when women are most prone to conceive

a passion, and to desire it, perhaps, in their pensive hours. She possessed all that earth sells, all that it lends, all that it gives. The Attachés declared there was nothing of which she was ignorant; the Contradictors asserted that there was much she ought to learn; the Observers remarked that her hands were white, her feet small, her movements a trifle too undulating. But, nevertheless, individuals of all species envied or disputed Octave's happiness, agreeing, for once in a way, that Madame Firmiani was the most aristocratically beautiful woman in Paris.

Still young, rich, a perfect musician, intelligent, witty, refined, and received (as a Cadignan) by the Princesse de Blamont-Chauvry, that oracle of the noble faubourg, loved by her rivals the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse her cousin, the Marquise d'Espard, and Madame de Macumer, — Madame Firmiani gratified all the vanities which feed or excite love. She was therefore sought by too many men not to fall a victim to Parisian malice and its charming calumnies, whispered behind a fan or in a safe aside. It was necessary to quote the remarks given at the beginning of this history to bring out the true Firmiani in contradistinction to the Firmiani of society. If some women forgave her happiness, others did not forgive her propriety. Now nothing is so dangerous in Paris as unfounded suspicions, — for the reason that it is impossible to destroy them.

This sketch of a woman who was admirably natural gives only a faint idea of her. It would need the pencil of an Ingres to render the pride of that brow, with its wealth of hair, the dignity of that glance, and the thoughts betrayed by the changing colors of the cheeks. In her were all things ; poets could have found an Agnes Sorel and a Joan of Arc, also the woman unknown, the Soul within that form, the soul of Eve, the knowledge of the treasures of good and the riches of evil, error and resignation, crime and devotion, the Donna Julia and the Haidee of Lord Byron.

The former guardsman stayed, with apparent impertinence, after the other guests had left the salons ; and Madame Firmiani found him sitting quietly before her in an armchair, evidently determined to remain, with the pertinacity of a fly which we are forced to kill to get rid of it. The hands of the clock marked two in the morning.

“ Madame,” said the old gentleman, as Madame Firmiani rose, hoping to make him understand that it was her good pleasure he should go, “ Madame, I am the uncle of Monsieur Octave de Camps.”

Madame Firmiani immediately sat down again, and showed her emotion. In spite of his sagacity the old Planter was unable to decide whether she turned pale from shame or pleasure. There are pleasures, delicious emotions the chaste heart seeks to veil, which cannot es-

cape the shock of startled modesty. The more delicacy a woman has, the more she seeks to hide the joys that are in her soul. Many women, incomprehensible in their tender caprices, long to hear a name pronounced which at other times they desire to bury in their hearts. Monsieur de Bourbonne did not interpret Madame Firmiani's agitation exactly in this way: pray forgive him, all provincials are distrustful.

"Well, monsieur?" said Madame Firmiani, giving him one of those clear, lucid glances in which we men can never see anything because they question us too much.

"Well, madame," returned the old man, "do you know what some one came to tell me in the depths of my province? That my nephew had ruined himself for you, and that the poor fellow was living in a garret while you were in silk and gold. Forgive my rustic sincerity; it may be useful for you to know of these calumnies."

"Stop, monsieur," said Madame Firmiani, with an imperative gesture; "I know all that. You are too polite to continue this subject if I request you to leave it, and too gallant—in the old-fashioned sense of the word," she added with a slight tone of irony—"not to agree that you have no right to question me. It would be ridiculous in me to defend myself. I trust that you will have a sufficiently good opinion of my character to

believe in the profound contempt which, I assure you, I feel for money, — although I was married, without any fortune, to a man of immense wealth. It is nothing to me whether your nephew is rich or poor; if I have received him in my house, and do now receive him, it is because I consider him worthy to be counted among my friends. All my friends, monsieur, respect each other; they know that I have not philosophy enough to admit into my house those I do not esteem; this may argue a want of charity; but my guardian-angel has maintained in me to this day a profound aversion for tattle, and also for dishonesty."

Though the ring of her voice was slightly raised during the first part of this answer, the last words were said with the ease and self-possession of Célimène bantering the Misanthrope.

"Madame," said Monsieur de Bourbonne, in a voice of some emotion, "I am an old man; I am almost Octave's father, and I ask your pardon most humbly for the question that I shall now venture to put to you, giving you my word of honor as a loyal gentleman that your answer shall die here," — laying his hand upon his heart, with an old-fashioned gesture that was truly religious. "Are these rumors true; do you love Octave?"

"Monsieur," she replied, "to any other man I should answer that question only by a look; but to you, and because you are indeed almost the father of Mon-

sieur de Camps, I reply by asking what you would think of a woman if to such a question she answered *yes*? To avow our love to him we love, when he loves us — ah! that may be; but even when we are certain of being loved forever, believe me, monsieur, it is an effort for us, and a reward to him. To say to another! — ”

She did not end her sentence, but rose, bowed to the old man, and withdrew into her private apartments, the doors of which, opening and closing behind her, had a language of their own to his sagacious ears.

“ Ah! the mischief!” thought he; “ what a woman! she is either a sly one or an angel;” and he got into his hired coach, the horses of which were stamping on the pavement of the silent courtyard, while the coachman was asleep on his box after cursing for the hundredth time his tardy customer.

The next morning about eight o'clock the old gentleman mounted the stairs of a house in the rue de l'Observance where Octave de Camps was living. If there was ever an astonished man it was the young professor when he beheld his uncle. The door was unlocked, his lamp still burning; he had been sitting up all night.

“ You rascal!” said Monsieur de Bourbonne, sitting down in the nearest chair; “ since when is it the fashion to laugh at uncles who have twenty-six thousand francs

a year from solid acres to which we are the sole heir? Let me tell you that in the olden time we stood in awe of such uncles as that. Come, speak up, what fault have you to find with me? Have n't I played my part as uncle properly? Did I ever require you to respect me? Have I ever refused you money? When did I shut the door in your face on pretence that you had come to look after my health? Have n't you had the most accommodating and the least domineering uncle that there is in France, — I wont say Europe, because that might be too presumptuous. You write to me, or you don't write, — no matter, I live on pledged affection, and I am making you the prettiest estate in all Touraine, the envy of the department. To be sure, I don't intend to let you have it till the last possible moment, but that's an excusable little fancy, is n't it? And what does monsieur himself do? — sells his own property and lives like a lackey! — ”

“Uncle — ”

“I'm not talking about uncles, I'm talking nephew. I have a right to your confidence. Come, confess at once; it is much the easiest way; I know that by experience. Have you been gambling? have you lost money at the Bourse? Say, ‘Uncle, I'm a wretch,’ and I'll hug you. But if you tell me any lies greater than those I used to tell at your age I'll sell my property, buy an annuity, and go back to the evil ways of my youth — if I can.”

“Uncle — ”

“I saw your Madame Firmiani yesterday,” went on the old fellow, kissing the tips of his fingers, which he gathered into a bunch. “She is charming. You have the consent and approbation of your uncle, if that will do you any good. As to the sanction of the Church, I suppose that’s useless, and the sacraments cost so much in these days. Come, speak out, have you ruined yourself for her?”

“Yes, uncle.”

“Ha ! the jade ! I’d have wagered it. In my time the women of the court were cleverer at ruining a man than the courtesans of to-day ; but this one — I recognized her ! — is a bit of the last century.”

“Uncle,” said Octave, with a manner that was tender and grave, “you are totally mistaken. Madame Firmiani deserves your esteem, and all the adoration the world gives her.”

“Youth, youth ! always the same !” cried Monsieur de Bourbonne. “Well, go on ; tell me the same old story. But please remember that my experience in gallantry is not of yesterday.”

“My dear, kind uncle, here is a letter which will tell you nearly all,” said Octave, taking it from an elegant portfolio, *her* gift, no doubt. “When you have read it I will tell you the rest, and you will then know a Madame Firmiani who is unknown to the world.”

“ I have n’t my spectacles ; read it aloud.”

Octave began : —

“ ‘ MY BELOVED — ’ ”

“ Hey, then you are still intimate with her ? ” interrupted his uncle.

“ Why yes, of course.”

“ You have n’t parted from her ? ”

“ Parted ! ” repeated Octave, “ we are married.”

“ Heavens ! ” cried Monsieur de Bourbonne, “ then why do you live in a garret ? ”

“ Let me go on.”

“ True — I ’m listening.”

Octave resumed the letter, but there were passages which he could not read without deep emotion.

“ ‘ MY BELOVED HUSBAND, — You ask me the reason of my sadness. Has it, then, passed from my soul to my face ; or have you only guessed it ? — but how could you fail to do so, one in heart as we are ? I cannot deceive you ; this may be a misfortune, for it is one of the conditions of happy love that a wife shall be gay and caressing. Perhaps I ought to deceive you, but I would not do it even if the happiness with which you have blessed and overpowered me depended on it.

“ ‘ Ah ! dearest, how much gratitude there is in my love. I long to love you forever, without limit ; yes, I desire to be forever proud of you. A woman’s glory

is in the man she loves. Esteem, consideration, honor, must they not be his who receives our all? Well, my angel has fallen. Yes, dear, the tale you told me has tarnished my past joys. Since then I have felt myself humiliated in you, — you whom I thought the most honorable of men, as you are the most loving, the most tender. I must indeed have deep confidence in your heart, so young and pure, to make you this avowal which costs me much. Ah! my dear love, how is it that you, knowing your father had unjustly deprived others of their property, that *you* can keep it?

“‘And you told me of this criminal act in a room filled with the mute witnesses of our love; and you are a gentleman, and you think yourself noble, and I am yours! I try to find excuses for you; I do find them in your youth and thoughtlessness. I know there is still something of the child about you. Perhaps you have never thought seriously of what fortune and integrity are. Oh! how your laugh wounded me. Reflect on that ruined family, always in distress; poor young girls who have reason to curse you daily; an old father saying to himself each night: “We might not now be starving if that man’s father had been an honest man —” ’”

“Good heavens!” cried Monsieur de Bourbonne, interrupting his nephew, “surely you have not been

such a fool as to tell that woman about your father's affair with the Bourgneufs? Women know more about wasting a fortune than making one."

"They know about integrity. But let me read on, uncle."

" 'Octave, no power on earth has authority to change the principles of honor. Look into your conscience and ask it by what name you are to call the action by which you hold your property.' "

The nephew looked at the uncle, who lowered his head.

" 'I will not tell you all the thoughts that assail me; they can be reduced to one, — this is it: I cannot respect the man who, knowingly, is smirched for a sum of money, whatever the amount may be; five francs stolen at play or five times a hundred thousand gained by a legal trick are equally dishonoring. I will tell you all. I feel myself degraded by the very love which has hitherto been all my joy. There rises in my soul a voice which my tenderness cannot stifle. Ah! I have wept to feel that I have more conscience than love. Were you to commit a crime I would hide you in my bosom from human justice, but my devotion could go no farther. Love, to a woman,

means boundless confidence, united to a need of reverencing, of esteeming, the being to whom she belongs. I have never conceived of love otherwise than as a fire in which all noble feelings are purified still more, — a fire which develops them.

“ ‘I have but one thing else to say: come to me poor, and my love shall be redoubled. If not, renounce it. Should I see you no more, I shall know what it means.

“ ‘But I do not wish, understand me, that you should make restitution because I urge it. Consult your own conscience. An act of justice such as that ought not to be a sacrifice made to love. I am your wife and not your mistress, and it is less a question of pleasing me than of inspiring in my soul a true respect.

“ ‘If I am mistaken, if you have ill-explained your father’s action, if, in short, you still think your right to the property equitable (oh! how I long to persuade myself that you are blameless), consider and decide by listening to the voice of your conscience; act wholly and solely from yourself. A man who loves a woman sincerely, as you love me, respects the sanctity of her trust in him too deeply to dishonor himself.

“ ‘I blame myself now for what I have written; a word might have sufficed, and I have preached to you! Scold me; I wish to be scolded, — but not much, only a

little. Dear, between us two the power is yours — you alone should perceive your own faults.’ ”

“ Well, uncle ? ” said Octave, whose eyes were full of tears.

“ There’s more in the letter ; finish it.”

“ Oh, the rest is only to be read by a lover,” answered Octave, smiling.

“ Yes, right, my boy,” said the old man, gently. “ I have had many affairs in my day, but I beg you to believe that I too have loved, *et ego in Arcadiâ*. But I don’t understand yet why you give lessons in mathematics.”

“ My dear uncle, I am your nephew ; is n’t that as good as saying that I had dipped into the capital left me by my father ? After I had read this letter a sort of revolution took place within me. I paid my whole arrearage of remorse in one day. I cannot describe to you the state I was in. As I drove in the Bois a voice called to me, ‘ That horse is not yours ; ’ when I ate my dinner it was saying, ‘ You have stolen this food.’ I was ashamed. The fresher my honesty, the more intense it was. I rushed to Madame Firmiani. Uncle ! that day I had pleasures of the heart, enjoyments of the soul, that were far beyond millions. Together we made out the account of what was due to the Bourgneufs, and I condemned myself, against Madame

Firmiani's advice, to pay three per cent interest. But all I had did not suffice to cover the full amount. We were lovers enough for her to offer, and me to accept, her savings — ”

“ What ! besides her other virtues does that adorable woman lay by money ? ” cried his uncle.

“ Don't laugh at her, uncle ; her position has obliged her to be very careful. Her husband went to Greece in 1820, and died there three years later. It has been impossible, up to the present time, to get legal proofs of his death, or obtain the will which he made leaving his whole property to his wife. These papers were either lost or stolen, or have gone astray during the troubles in Greece, — a country where registers are not kept as they are in France, and where we have no consul. Uncertain whether she might not be forced to give up her fortune, she has lived with the utmost prudence. As for me, I wish to acquire property which shall be *mine*, so as to provide for my wife in case she is forced to lose hers.”

“ But why didn't you tell me all this ? My dear nephew, you might have known that I love you enough to pay all your good debts, the debts of a gentleman. I'll play the traditional uncle now, and revenge myself ! ”

“ Ah ! uncle, I know your vengeance ! but let me get rich by my own industry. If you want to do me a

real service, make me an allowance of two or three thousand francs a year, till I see my way to an enterprise for which I shall want capital. At this moment I am so happy that all I desire is just the means of living. I give lessons so that I may not live at the cost of *any one*. If you only knew the happiness I had in making that restitution! I found the Bourgneufs, after a good deal of trouble, living miserably and in need of everything. The old father was a lottery agent; the two daughters kept his books and took care of the house; the mother was always ill. The daughters are charming girls, but they have been cruelly taught that the world thinks little of beauty without money. What a scene it was! I entered their house the accomplice in a crime; I left it an honest man, who had purged his father's memory. Uncle, I don't judge him; there is such excitement, such passion in a lawsuit that even an honorable man may be led astray by them. Lawyers can make the most unjust claims legal; laws have convenient syllogisms to quiet consciences. My visit was a drama. To *be* Providence itself; actually to fulfil that futile wish, "If heaven were to send us twenty thousand francs a year,"—that silly wish we all make, laughing; to bring opulence to a family sitting by the light of one miserable lamp over a poor turf fire!—no, words cannot describe it. My extreme justice seemed to them unjust. Well! if there is a

Paradise my father is happy in it now. As for me, I am loved as no man was ever loved yet. Madame Firmiani gives me more than happiness; she has inspired me with a delicacy of feeling I think I lacked. So I call her *my dear conscience*, — a love-word which expresses certain secret harmonies within our hearts. I find honesty profitable; I shall get rich in time by myself. I've an industrial scheme in my head, and if it succeeds I shall earn millions."

"Ah! my boy, you have your mother's soul," said the old man, his eyes filling at the thought of his sister.

Just then, in spite of the distance between Octave's garret and the street, the young man heard the sound of a carriage.

"There she is!" he cried; "I know her horses by the way they are pulled up."

A few moments more, and Madame Firmiani entered the room.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, with a gesture of annoyance on seeing Monsieur de Bourbonne. "But our uncle is not in the way," she added quickly, smiling; "I came to humbly entreat my husband to accept my fortune. The Austrian Embassy has just sent me a document which proves the death of Monsieur Firmiani, also the will, which his valet was keeping safely to put into my own hands. Octave, you can accept it all; you are richer

than I, for you have treasures here " (laying her hand upon his heart) "to which none but God can add." Then, unable to support her happiness, she laid her head upon her husband's breast.

"My dear niece," said the old man, "in my day, we made love; in yours, you love. You women are all that is best in humanity; you are not even guilty of your faults, for they come through us."



THE END.

A MEMOIR OF HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

Compiled and written by KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY, translator of Balzac's works. With portrait of Balzac, taken one hour after death, by Eugène Giraud, and a Sketch of the Prison of the Collège de Vendôme. One volume, 12mo. Half Russia, uniform with our edition of Balzac's works. Price, \$1.50.

A complete life of Balzac can probably never be written. The sole object of the present volume is to present Balzac to American readers. This memoir is meant to be a presentation of the man, — and not of his work, except as it was a part of himself, — derived from authentic sources of information, and presented in their own words, with such simple elucidations as a close intercourse with Balzac's mind, necessitated by conscientious translation, naturally gives. The portrait in this volume was considered by Madame de Balzac the best likeness of her husband.

Miss Wormeley's discussion of the subject is of value in many ways, and it has long been needed as a help to comprehension of his life and character. Personally, he lived up to his theory. His life was in fact austere. Any detailed account of the conditions under which he worked, such as are given in this volume, will show that this must have been the case; and the fact strongly reinforces the doctrine. Miss Wormeley, in arranging her account of his career, has, almost of necessity, made free use of the letters and memoir published by Balzac's sister, Madame Surville. She has also, whenever it would serve the purpose of illustration better, quoted from the sketches of him by his contemporaries, wisely rejecting the trivialities and frivolities by the exaggeration of which many of his first chroniclers seemed bent upon giving the great author a kind of opera-bouffe aspect. To judge from some of these accounts, he was flighty, irresponsible, possibly a little mad, prone to lose touch of actualities by the dominance of his imagination, fond of wild and impracticable schemes, and altogether an eccentric and unstable person. But it is not difficult to prove that Balzac was quite a different character; that he possessed a marvellous power of intellectual organization; that he was the most methodical and indefatigable of workers; that he was a man of a most delicate sense of humor; that his life was not simply devoted to literary ambition, but was a martyrdom to obligations which were his misfortune, but not his fault.

All this Miss Wormley has well set forth; and in doing so she has certainly relieved Balzac of much unmerited odium, and has enabled those who have not made a study of his character and work to understand how high the place is in any estimate of the helpers of modern progress and enlightenment to which his genius and the loftiness of his aims entitle him. This memoir is a very modest biography, though a very good one. The author has effaced herself as much as possible, and has relied upon "documents" whenever they were trustworthy. — *N. Y. Tribune.*

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The force and passion of the stories of Balzac are unapproachable. He had the art of putting into half a dozen pages all the fire and stress which many writers, who are still great, cannot compass in a volume. The present volume is an admirable collection, and presents well his power of handling the short story. That the translation is excellent need hardly be said — *Boston Courier*.

The six stories, admirably translated by Miss Wormeley, afford good examples of Balzac's work in what not a few critics have thought his chief specialty. It is certain that no writer of many novels wrote so many short stories as he; and it is equally as certain that his short stories are, almost without an exception, models of what such compositions ought to be. . . . No modern author, however, of any school whatever, has succeeded in producing short stories half so good as Balzac's best. Balzac did not, indeed, attempt to display his subtlety and deftness by writing short stories about nothing. Every one of his tales contains an episode, not necessarily, but usually, a dramatic episode. The first in the present collection, better known as "La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote," is really a short novel. It has all the machinery, all the interest, all the detail of a regular story. The difference is that it is compressed as Balzac only could compress; that here and there important events, changes, etc., are indicated in a few powerful lines instead of being elaborated: that the vital points are thrown into strong relief. Take the pathetic story of "Colonel Chabert." It begins with an elaboration of detail. The description of the lawyer's office might seem to some too minute. But it is the stage upon which the Colonel is to appear, and when he enters we see the value of the preliminaries, for a picture is presented which the memory seizes and holds. As the action progresses, detail is used more parsimoniously, because the *mise-en-scène* has already been completed, and because, also, the characters once clearly described, the development of character and the working of passion can be indicated with a few pregnant strokes. Notwithstanding this increasing economy of space, the action takes on a swifter intensity, and the culmination of the tragedy leaves the reader breathless.

In "The Atheist's Mass" we have quite a new kind of story. This is rather a psychological study than a narrative of action. Two widely distinguished characters are thrown on the canvas here, — that of the great surgeon and that of the humble patron; and one knows not which most to admire, the vigor of the drawing, or the subtle and lucid psychical analysis. In both there is rare beauty of soul, and perhaps, after all, the poor Auvergnat surpasses the eminent surgeon, though this is a delicate and difficult question. But how complete the little story is; how much it tells; with what skill, and in how delightful a manner! Then there is that tremendous haunting legend of "La Grande Bretèche," a story which has always been turned into more languages and twisted into more new forms than almost any other of its kind extant. What author has equalled the continuing horror of that unfaithful wife's agony, compelled to look on and assist at the slow murder of her entrapped lover? . . . Then the death of the husband and wife, — the one by quick and fiercer dissipation, the other by simple refusal to live longer, — and the abandonment of the accursed dwelling to solitude and decay, complete a picture, which for vividness, emotional force, imaginative power, and comprehensiveness of effects, can be said to have few equals in its own class of fiction. — *Kansas City Journal*.

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It is the account of a guerilla war conducted by a whole country-side against one great land-owner,—a war in which, moreover, the lawless aggressions of the peasantry are prompted, supported, and directed by an amazing alliance between the richest, most unscrupulous, and most powerful of the neighboring provincial magnates, who, by controlling, through family council, the local administration, are in a position to paralyze resistance to their conspiracy. The working out of this deep plot affords the author opportunity for the introduction of a whole gallery of marvellous studies.

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Of all of Balzac's works thus far translated by Miss Katharine Prescott Wormeley, the last in the series, "Louis Lambert," is the most difficult of comprehension. It is the second of the author's Philosophical Studies, "The Magic Skin" being the first, and "Seraphita," shortly to be published, being the third and last. In "Louis Lambert" Balzac has presented a study of a noble soul—a spirit of exalted and lofty aspirations which chafes under the fetters of earthly existence, and has no sympathy with the world of materialism. This pure-souled genius is made the medium, moreover, for the enunciation of the outlines of a system of philosophy which goes to the very roots of Oriental occultism and mysticism as its source, and which thus reveals the marvellous scope of Balzac's learning. The scholarly introduction to the book by George Frederic Parsons, in addition to throwing a great deal of valuable light upon other phases of the work, shows how many of the most recent scientific theories are directly in line with the doctrines broadly set forth by Balzac nearly sixty years ago. The book is one to be studied rather than read; and it is made intelligible by the extremely able introduction and by Miss Wormeley's excellent translation. — *The Book-Buyer*.

"Louis Lambert," with the two other members of the Trilogy, "La Peau de Chagrin" and "Seraphita," is a book which presents many difficulties to the student. It deals with profound and unfamiliar subjects, and the meaning of the author by no means lies on the surface. It is the study of a great, aspiring soul enshrined in a feeble body, the sword wearing out the scabbard, the spirit soaring away from its prison-house of flesh to its more congenial home. It is in marked contrast to the study of the destructive and debasing process which we see in the "Peau de Chagrin." It stands midway between this study of the mean and base and that noble presentation of the final evolution of a soul on the very borders of Divinity which Balzac gives us in "Seraphita."

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

COUSIN BETTE.

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY.

He [Balzac] does not make Vice the leading principle of life. The most terrible punishment invariably awaits transgressors. . . . Psychologically considered, "Cousin Bette" with the "Peau de Chagrin" and "The Alkahest" are the most powerful of all Balzac's studies. The marvellous acquaintance this romance-writer had with all phases and conditions of French men and women has never been more strongly accentuated. For a French romance presenting difficulties in translation, Miss Wormeley's work is excellent. Its faithfulness is even remarkable. We can hardly conceive that after this series is completed Balzac will remain unknown or unappreciated by American readers. — *New York Times*.

Balzac aspired to paint French life, especially Parisian life, in all its aspects, — "the great modern monster with its every face," to use his own words; and in no one of his novels is his insight keener, his coloring bolder, or his disclosures of the corruptions of city life more painfully realistic, than in "Cousin Bette." . . . Not one of the admirably rendered series shows more breadth, skill, and sympathy with every characteristic of the great French author than does this. And it is quite a marvel of translation. — *The American, Philadelphia*.

'T is true the book is not for babes, but he must have strange views of innocence who would ignore the influence for good inherent in such a work. Ignorance constitutes but a sorry shield against the onslaughts of temptation. It is well if wisdom can be so cheaply got as by the perusal of the book. — *American Hebrew*.

It is an awful picture, but it is emphatically a work of genius. . . . It cannot be said that "Cousin Bette" is a book for those who like only optimistic presentations of life. It is a study in morbid pathology; an inquiry into the working of passions and vices, the mischief actually caused by what in all human societies is too patent and too constantly in evidence to be denied or ignored. . . . He [Balzac] must be judged by the scientific standard, and from that point of view there can be no hesitation in declaring "Cousin Bette" a most powerful work. — *New York Tribune*.

And there is much in the characters that is improper and fortunately counter to our civilization; still the tone concerning these very things is a healthy one, and Balzac's belief in purity and goodness, his faith in the better part of humanity, is shown in the beautiful purity of Madame Hulot, and the lovely chastity of Hortense. In "Cousin Bette," as in all Balzac's works, he manifests a familiarity with the ethics of life which has gained for him the exalted position as the greatest of French novelists. — *St. Paul Dispatch*.

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

THE MAGIC SKIN.

(LA PEAU DE CHAGRIN.)

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY.

“The Magic Skin” is a great novel, — great in its conception, great in its execution, and great in the impression it leaves upon the reader’s mind. Those who deny that Balzac is a moral teacher will retract their opinion after reading this powerful allegory. It is a picturesque representation of the great moral truth that in life we have to pay for every excess we enjoy. In the gradual shrinking of the “Magic Skin” we see the inevitable law that by uncontrolled dissipation of body or mind we use up our physical strength and exhaust our vitality. In that beautiful, cold, fascinating character, *Fédora*, the writer shows us the glittering world of fashion and frivolity which men pursue vainly and find to their cost only dust and ashes. In the gentle, loving, and devoted *Pauline*, Balzac represents the lasting and pure pleasures of domestic life. But in *Raphael*’s short enjoyment of them we see the workings of that inflexible law, “Whatever ye sow that shall ye also reap.” In the vivid, striking, realistic picture of Parisian life which Balzac presents to us in “The Magic Skin,” the writer had a conscious moral purpose. We know of no more awful allegory in literature. — *Boston Transcript*.

The story is powerful and original; but its readers will be most affected by its marvellous knowledge of human nature, and the deep-cutting dissection of character which makes the attempts of our own analytical novelists appear superficial and experimental. Life in all classes of the Paris of Louis Philippe’s time is portrayed in the strongest lights and shadows, and with continual flashes of wit, satire, and sarcasm which spare neither politician, philosopher, priest, poet, journalist, artist, man of the world, nor woman of the world. Through a maze of heterogeneous personages *Raphael*, the hero, is carried, pursued by the relentless Magic Skin, which drives him mercilessly to his doom. The vices of high society are laid bare; but there is also a beautiful exposition of purity in the humble life of *Pauline*, who is the good angel of the story. In translating “*La Peau de Chagrin*” Miss Wormeley has done work that is at once skillful and discreet. It is a man’s book, virile though not vulgar, and exposing prominences in French social views such as most writers veil in obscurities. Here all is frankly and honestly shown, but by a man of genius, who had no more need of prudish hypocrisy than Shakespeare.

Mr. Parsons’s thoughtful preface is a fitting introduction to the most wonderful of all Balzac’s romances. It is not a whit too strong for Mr. Parsons to write that, saving Shakespeare, “no man could have been better fitted to examine mental processes, to gauge their effects, to estimate their significance and to define their nature and scope” than Balzac. If Balzac had been a German, and not a Frenchman of the French, this book of his would be as much of an epoch-maker as Goethe’s “*Faust*.” It may take years before the fuller appreciation of “*La Peau de Chagrin*” comes, but it is a study of life which will be studied in centuries yet to come. — *New York Times*.

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MODESTE MIGNON.

TRANSLATED BY

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In "Modeste Mignon" we still have that masterly power of analysis, keen, incisive, piercing superficiality and pretence, as a rapier pierces a doublet, but we have in addition the purity and sweetness of a genuine light comedy, — a comedy which has for its central object the delineation of the mysteries of a young girl's mind.

As a whole, "Modeste Mignon" is not only a masterpiece of French art, but a masterpiece of that master before whom later novelists must pale their ineffectual fires. As the different examples of Balzac's skill are brought before the public through the excellent translations by Miss Wormeley, none competent to judge can fail to perceive the power of that gigantic intellect which projected and carried out the scheme of the *Comédie Humaine*, nor fail to understand the improvement in literature that would result if Balzac's methods and aims were carefully studied by all who aspire to the name of novelist. — *New York Home Journal*.

The public owes a debt of gratitude to the industrious translator of Balzac's masterpieces. They follow one another with sufficient rapidity to stand in striking contrast with each other. The conscientious reader of them cannot but lay down one after another with an increasing admiration for their author's marvellous grasp upon the great social forces which govern the thought and actions of men. In "Modeste Mignon," as in "Eugénie Grandet," we find that the tremulous vibrations of first love in the heart of a young and pure-minded girl are not deemed unworthy of this great artist's study. The delicate growth of a sentiment which gradually expanded into a passion, and which was absolutely free from any taint of sensuality, is analyzed in "Modeste Mignon" with consummate skill. The plot of this book is far from extraordinary. It is even commonplace. But where in these days shall we find another author who can out of such a simple plot make a story like the one before us? The many-sidedness of Balzac's genius is widely acknowledged; but there are probably few people among those whose acquaintance with his writings has been necessarily limited to translations who could conceive of him producing such a bright and sparkling story, thoroughly realistic, full of vitalizing power, keen analysis, and depth of study and reflection, brilliantly imaginative, and showing an elasticity in its creative process which cannot fail to attract every lover of a higher and better art in fiction.

But light and delicate as Balzac's touch generally is throughout this volume, there is also shown a slumbering force which occasionally awakens and delivers a blow that seems as if it had been struck by the hammer of Thor. He ranges over the whole scale of human passion and emotion, penetrates into the very inmost chambers of the heart, apprehends its movements, and lays bare its weakness with a firm and yet delicate touch of his scalpel. The book has been excellently translated by Miss Wormeley. She is fully in sympathy with the author, and has caught his spirit, and the result is a translation which preserves the full flavor, vigor, and delicacy of the original.

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

THE ALKAHEST;

Or, The House of Claës.

Among the novels of Honoré de Balzac "*La Recherche de l'Absolu*" has always counted one of the masterpieces. The terrible dominion of a fixed idea was never shown with more tremendous force than is depicted in the absorption of all the powers, the mind, and body of Balthazar Claës by the desire to discover the Absolute, the "Alkahest." The lovely old mansion at Duai, its sumptuous furniture, its priceless pictures, its rare bric-à-brac, the pyramid of costly tulips that glowed in the garden, are painted with a touch rich and vivid, which shows Balzac at his best. This great novelist was always minute and exhaustive in his descriptions; but in this story the material in which he worked was of a sort to arouse his enthusiasm, and he evidently revels in the attractive setting which its events demand. The tale itself is penetrating and powerful. — *Boston Courier*.

The "Alkahest" is a strong story, and all through it is to be felt that sub-current of vitalizing energy which in so many of Balzac's books seems to propel the principal characters as in a special atmosphere, hurrying them with a kind of fiery yet restrained impatience toward the doom assigned them. . . . The scientific and mystical features of the story are cleverly handled. Balzac made deep inquiries before writing his philosophical studies, as he called them, and he was always rather ahead than abreast of the thoughts of his time. The central problem dealt with here is, of course, as complete a mystery to-day as when the "*Recherche de l'Absolu*" was written. . . . Miss Wormeley has made a characteristically excellent translation of a book which presents many unusual difficulties and abstruse points. It is rarely possible to assert with any truth that an English version of a French book may be read by the public with nearly as much profit and apprehension as the original; but it is the simple fact in this instance, and it is certainly remarkable enough to deserve emphasis. — *New York Tribune*.

He who would know the art of novel-writing may go to Balzac and find an art that is natural, simple, and beautiful in its exercise, and is directed to both thought and feeling in behalf of humanity, and that realizes something good and enduring. He may look without much trouble at "*The Alkahest; or, The House of Claës*," one of the most illustrative of the author's method and aim, and excelling in philosophical analysis and in philosophical value.

In this work Balzac has opposed the heart and intellect in a contest amid the conditions of social life, and sought to reveal their comparative nature and influence, siding, although a remarkable example himself of intellectual development and force, in favor of the heart, — that Flemish heart which is ideal of all that is powerful for good and happiness in domestic life, and determines Flemish character so strongly that the qualities of that character impress themselves fixedly in Flemish painting and architecture. — *Sunday Globe, Boston*.

One more scene in Balzac's wonderful "*Comedy of Human Life*." It is "*The Alkahest; or, The House of Claës*," the greatest of the "philosophical studies." It tells of the mad, persistent, vain endeavors of Balthazar, a scientist, to discover the Absolute. Through years he squanders his estate in fruitless experiments. It is a drama that slowly chills the blood. Then comes the *finale*. "Suddenly the dying man raised himself by his wrists, and cast on his frightened children a look which struck like lightning; the hairs that fringed the bald head stirred, the wrinkles quivered, the features were illumined with spiritual fires, a breath passed across that face and rendered it sublime. He raised a hand clenched in fury, and uttered with a piercing cry the famous word of Archimedes, 'Eureka!' — I have found." It is the way Balthazar found the Absolute. — *Philadelphia Press*.

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THE TWO BROTHERS.

"It is quite possible that many French students may be somewhat puzzled to encounter that story of Balzac's which they have always known under the title of 'Un Menage de Garçon, in the strange and unfamiliar appellation 'The Two Brothers.' The explanation is simple enough, and it is interesting as illustrating one of Balzac's peculiarities. A number of his books underwent many changes before they crystallized permanently in the edition definitive. Some of them were begun in a newspaper or review, carried along some distance in that way, then dropped, to appear presently enlarged, altered, 'grown,' as is said of children, 'out of knowledge.' The 'History of Balzac's Works,' by Charles de Lovenjoul, gives all the details of these bewildering metamorphoses. The first title of the present story was that which the American translator has selected, namely, 'Les deux Frères.' The first part of it appeared in *La Presse* in 1841 with this designation, and in 1843 it was published in two volumes without change of title. The second part (now incorporated with the first) appeared in *La Presse* in 1842, under the title 'Un Menage de Garçon en Province,' and figured as the continuation of 'The Two Brothers.' In 1843 the two parts were brought together, and the whole published as 'Un Menage de Garçon en Province.' Balzac, however, was not yet satisfied. Having announced yet another title, namely, 'Le Bonhomme Rouget,' he abandoned that, cancelled both the former ones, and called the tale, in the definitive edition of his works, 'La Rabouilleuse,' after Flore Brazier, one of the characters in it. There can be no doubt that Miss Wormeley has chosen the most apposite of all these titles. The real subject is the career of the two brothers, Philippe and Joseph Bridau." — *New York Tribune*.

"Messrs. Roberts Brothers, of Boston have added to the excellent translations they have already published of several of Balzac's most famous novels a translation of 'The Two Brothers,' which forms a sequence in 'Scenes from Provincial Life.' As with the other novels that have preceded it, nothing but the highest praise can be awarded the work of the translator. It gives to the reader of English a remarkable rendering of Balzac's nervous, idiomatic French; and it presents the novel-reader a novel that must challenge his comparisons with the popular novels of the times. One cannot read far in Balzac's pages without feeling refreshed by contact with a vigorous intellect. In this story he attempted to display two opposite types of character in brothers, which had been inherited by them from different ancestors. In order to do this effectively he introduces in a few opening pages these ancestors, before coming to the real action of the story. . . . There is no plot, no intrigue, no aim whatever except to depict the characters of Joseph, Philippe, the mother, and the immediate friends about them. All this is done, however, with such vivid reality that it fascinates the attention. It is like watching an artist develop with telling colors a great breathing, living picture. It is, in its way, a study of evolution. 'Perhaps I have never drawn a picture,' said Balzac, in reference to the book, 'that shows more plainly how essential to European society is the indissoluble marriage bond, how fatal the results of feminine weakness, how great the dangers arising from selfish interests when indulged without restraint.' There are many Philippes in the world outside of France; the shrewd, selfish, swaggering Philippes who march through life rough-shod, regardless of kindred, friends, or foes. Here is the man painted to the life for all time, and any country. Here also is the woman, with all her simplicity and weakness, who always and ever fails to gauge rightly this sort of man; who is doomed to be his slave and victim. Balzac met them in his Parisian world forty years ago, and here they take their places in his comedy of human life. While there are such strong portraitures in literature as these novels, it is not easy to understand how so many weak, flimsy, pretentious ones find any readers at all. Let us have Balzac in excellent translation by all means, — all that remarkable series that are still quite as good as new to the great majority of the English-speaking people." — *Brooklyn Citizen*.

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

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"The many-sidedness of Balzac's genius is strikingly exhibited in 'Le Medicin de Campagne.' It demonstrates also the injustice of much of the criticism directed against this great writer by Sainte-Beuve and others who have followed his lines of interpretation. It is significant that this book was one of Balzac's favorites. It is significant because the work is characterized by none of the qualities which it has been customary to attribute to his fiction, and which do, in fact, appear in much of it. The 'Country Doctor' is not a novel in the ordinary sense of the term. It is rather a prose poem, and one of the most beautiful, captivating, and ennobling in any literature. Balzac himself said of it that it was a picture of 'the Gospel in action,' and the definition is keen and succinct. It is indeed a story of the noblest and most practical philanthropy, so enriched by philosophy, so broadened by profound economic analysis, so full of deep suggestion and piercing criticism of social problems that it might constitute a statesman's text-book, and convey useful ideas to the most experienced administrators. . . . The devotion of the country doctor to the community whose interests he had taken in charge is indeed touching and beautiful, but such instances are not wholly unfamiliar. What gives this story its charm and distinction is the art of the writer in developing before us, by the simplest and least obtrusive means, one of those really majestic characters whose lives men follow with never-failing interest, and whose biographies constitute the most fascinating literature, since they illustrate and stimulate the higher potentialities latent in every human breast. . . . It only remains to be said that Miss Wormeley has translated the book excellently, and has preserved as nearly as possible every shade of the author's meaning. The enterprise of the publishers in undertaking to English Balzac is certainly commendable, but it could not have succeeded as it has but for the good fortune which sent them so capable and sympathetic a translator." — *New York Tribune*.

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

COUSIN PONS.

"It is late in the day to speak of the genius of Balzac, but it is worth while to commend the reader to the admirable translation of a number of his works issued by an American firm of publishers. The work of Miss Wormeley, whose name does not appear upon the titlepage, but who is said to be the translator, is deserving of the highest praise. Balzac's intensely idiomatic French, as well as his occasional treatment of recondite subjects, and his frequent elucidation of complicated business transactions, render the translation of his works difficult; but the present translator has turned the original into clear and fluent English, reading not at all like a translation, yet preserving Balzac's vigorous and characteristic style. It is not only the best translation of Balzac which we have, — which would not be high praise, since English versions of his novels have hitherto been few and fragmentary, — but one of the most excellent translations of any French author which we have met. The publishers have laid the American readers under obligation both by undertaking the enterprise of presenting Balzac in an English dress, and by their selection of a translator; and it is most desirable that they should complete the work so well begun by putting within the reach of English-speaking readers the remainder of that marvellous body of fiction, *The Comédie Humaine*." — *The Church Review*.

"'Cousin Pons' is the latest translation in the Balzac series now being issued by Roberts Brothers, Boston. It is a strong story of friendship and of greed. To all intents and purposes the narrative indicates a complete and perfect triumph of vice over virtue; but vice is painted in such hideous colors, and virtue is shown in such effulgent beauty, as to make the moral well-nigh awe-inspiring. Balzac does not stay the natural course of events. He permits each character to work out its own results, and then makes the impression desired by comparative methods. In this, as in all his works, the wonderful writer manifests a familiarity with the ethics of life which has gained for him the eternal remembrance and gratitude of all readers; and it is fair to presume that the Balzac now being translated and published by the Roberts Brothers will revive his name and bring again to his feet the world of English-speaking people." — *Springfield Republican*.

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"Those who have formed a hasty judgment of Balzac from reading the 'Duchesse de Langeais' would do well to read 'Cousin Pons.' Balzac sees and depicts virtue as perfectly as vice, and it is his faculty of describing beauty as well as ugliness which has made him famous. The delicacy of perception which enabled him to perceive and describe every shade of feeling in 'Cousin Pons' and to appreciate the nobility of Schmucke's character is the chief characteristic of genius. The reader must read all the 'Scenes from Parisian Life' to have any full conception of Balzac's greatness. His breadth of vision, his dramatic power, his searching analysis of the most transient emotions, and his quick perceptions of beauty, are all evident in 'Cousin Pons.' It is an interesting, exciting novel, a perfect piece of literary execution, and a story which is, if sad, neither coarse nor immoral." — *Boston Transcript*.

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